

A M E R I C A N U N I V E R S I T Y S T U D I E S

My People as Your People

A Textual and Archaeological Analysis
of the Reign of Jehoshaphat

CHRIS MCKINNY

My People as Your People provides an in-depth analysis of the chronology, history, and archaeology associated with the reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah. The synthesis of these various elements illuminates a diverse geo-political picture of the southern Levant in the mid-ninth century BCE. In recent years, archaeologists and biblical scholars have dealt quite extensively with the tenth and eighth centuries BCE due to both the controversial aspects of recent interpretations associated with the so-called United Kingdom and the established archaeological data relating to Judah's rise as a significant polity in the eighth century BCE. On the other hand, the ninth century BCE has received considerably less scholarly treatment, despite the fact that many new archaeological strata have been uncovered in recent years that have a direct bearing upon this period. *My People as Your People* is an attempt to fill this gap in our knowledge. In accomplishing this, it both provides a nuanced understanding of Judah in the mid-ninth century BCE and also demonstrates the significance of this period in the larger setting of the history of the Divided Kingdom.

"*My People as Your People* is an excellent study of the textual, historical, and archaeological evidence relating to the reign of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. The author attempts to tie together updated analyses of the relevant evidence to present a fresh and impressive study of this important king. I highly recommend this volume!"

Aren M. Maeir, Director, Ackerman Family Bar-Ilan University Expedition to Gath; Director, Minerva Center for the Relations Between Israel and Aram in Biblical Times; Co-editor, Israel Exploration Journal



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Praise for **My People as Your People**

“Chris McKinny surveys all of the relevant sources and analyzes them critically and methodically, and then brings together the first up-to-date comprehensive summary of all of the relevant archaeological data from Israel, Transjordan, and especially Judah in the ninth century BCE. Even scholars who will not ultimately accept his compelling conclusions will appreciate the sheer mass of the material that he has brought together. McKinny’s writing style is clear, which will make this material that much more accessible to the non-archaeologist as well.”

*Yigal Levin, The Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department
of Jewish History, Bar-Ilan University*

My People as Your People

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To Mindy—1 Samuel 1:27–28

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Preface

In this book, I examine the reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah using the available archaeological and textual data. Chapter One serves as the introduction to the book. In Chapter Two, I discuss the historical setting of Judah's neighbors by focusing primarily on Omride Israel and its relationship to Phoenicia and Aram. This discussion addresses the set of historical circumstances that brought about the cessation of Israelite-Judahite hostility during the reigns of Omri and Asa. This chapter also tackles some textual and historical issues associated with Israel and Judah's relationship to Moab (2 Kings 3; 2 Chron. 20:1–30).

Chapter Three includes a textual analysis and a historical reconstruction of the Battle of Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:1–36). This chapter also serves as a starting point for a discussion of the larger historical setting in which Jehoshaphat reigned. Throughout this chapter, I address several issues related to a historical understanding of this text in relation to the Tel Dan Stele and Aramean-Israelite relations. I also deal with the Chronicler's version of the battle (2 Chron. 18) and discuss the historical value of the few expansions from the Kings' account. Since this text is often used as evidence for determining that Jehoshaphat was a vassal to Ahab, I also address the arguments associated with this line of thinking.

Chapter Four analyzes Jehoshaphat's reign in 1 Kings 22:41–50. This analysis is the most important textual element of this book and lays the foundation for the archaeological discussion that follows. Throughout the chapter, I suggest a positive

reading of the chronistic text that accepts the general historicity of Judah and Israel's alliance (1 Kings 22:44), Judah's domination of Edom (2 Kings 22:47), and the reality of Jehoshaphat's Aravah activity that stretched to the Red Sea and beyond. I endeavor to show that this view is at odds with several recent assessments that view the late 9th or early 8th centuries BCE as the moment of Judah's rise to prominence in these regions.

Finally, Chapter Five deals with the archaeological remains of Judah in the late Iron IIA (i.e., the 9th century BCE). My examination largely avoids archaeological survey material and focuses on published and some unpublished archaeological sites in Judah that possessed Iron IIA material. My discussion is limited to the regions of Benjamin, the Shephelah, the Negev and the Aravah. Together with the preceding chapter, this section serves as the core data of my study where I pull together textual and archaeological source material. In addition to primary material, I interact with a large body of older and up-to-date secondary literature associated with Judah in the Iron IIA. Throughout this final chapter, I address many different historical geographical issues surrounding the identification and political affiliation with the sites in question. Altogether, an analysis of this data across these chapters has brought me to three main conclusions regarding the nature of Judah during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the mid-9th century BCE. These will be discussed in Chapter Six.



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To my parents and grandparents—I cannot begin to express my gratefulness for your encouragement and support in our Israel adventures. To Mindy, Samuel, and Simon—thank you for your patience, sacrifices, and love—I love you.

Introduction

The kingdom of Judah is the focal point of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible. Specifically, the Davidic dynasty is central to the theological, political and historical themes of the writers of scripture. Despite the centrality of this dynasty, the biblical record does not devote equal written space to the monarchs that span the over four hundred year existence of David's line. Jehoshaphat is an example of a biblically attested successful Davidic king who received notably less treatment than some of his more heralded ancestors and descendants (e.g., Solomon, Hezekiah). This is particularly the case in what is usually considered to be the source that is closest in time to the actual events, the book of Kings, which largely discusses Jehoshaphat's reign as it relates to the ignominious Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings 22) and Jehoram of Israel (2 Kings 3). This simple reality coupled with the timeframe (mid-9th century BCE) in which Jehoshaphat arose to power makes his reign an interesting case study for a comparison of the biblical narratives, the relevant extra-biblical texts, and the existing archaeological data.

The mid-9th century BCE was the last period of southern Levantine history that was completely free from Assyrian intervention. This undisturbed state ended with the southern incursions of Shalmaneser III in 853 BCE (i.e., the Battle of Qarqar) and 841 BCE (tribute from Jehu king of Israel). The reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah overlaps with the final period of Levantine history (until ca. 732 BCE) wherein the prevailing geopolitical framework is directly tied

to relatively equal nation-states, as opposed to its structure being primarily shaped by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the latter half of the 8th century BCE.¹ Kingdoms such as Aram-Damascus and Philistine Gath experienced the apex stage of their respective people's history in the 9th century BCE. Together these polities along with several others helped shaped the fortunes and failures of the Davidic monarchy throughout the Iron Age IIA.² An examination of the geo-political situation of each of these kingdoms would logically provide informative clues to historical issues related to Jehoshaphat's kingdom such as economic relations, settlement pattern, and national administration.

Another one of these nation states is the northern kingdom of Israel, which was then ruled by the Omride dynasty, a dynasty which according to 1 Kings 22:44; 2 Kings 8:18; 2 Chron. 18:1; 21:6 entered into an economic and military alliance with Jehoshaphat through the marriage of Jehoram of Judah and Athaliah of Israel. Several questions can be asked about this alliance in order to shed light on the kingdom of Jehoshaphat. What was the nature of the marriage alliance? How did the alliance affect the outcomes of Israel and Judah? How did the alliance shape relations with neighboring nation vassal states, such as Moab and Edom?

The Omride-Davidide alliance represents a new phase in the history of ancient Israel and Judah. The preceding half-century (c. 931–880 BCE) was marked by a war of attrition between the two related nation states over the course of the reigns of Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Abijah, Asa, Nadab, Baasha, and Elah (cf. 1 Kings 15:6–8, 16, 32). The partially synchronous reigns of Asa of Judah (911–869 BCE) and Omri of Israel (885–874 BCE) marks a major geo-political shift towards peaceful relations between Judah and Israel. This shift seems to have been instigated by Omri who staved off Israelite aggression against Philistine Gibbethon (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15–17) and made an alliance with Phoenician Ethbaal, king of Sidon (1 Kings 16:31).

The political causes for the new peaceful relations between Israel and Judah will likely remain unclear. However, over the course of the 9th century BCE there

-
1. After Shalmaneser III's (858–824 BCE) second campaign in 841 BCE in which he demanded the tribute of several southern Levantine polities including Jehu, king of Israel, the subsequent Neo-Assyrian monarchs did not make any incursions into the southern Levant until the reign of Adad-Nirari III (811–793 BCE) (Siddall 2013, 50–59 (see especially the discussion on the Tell el-Rimah Stele, cf. 2 Kings 13:5)). For the subsequent Neo-Assyrian policy in Judah see Lipschits (2005, 1–36) and Stern (2001, 130–214).
 2. This work will use the following periodization for the archaeological periods: Iron I (1200–1000 BCE); Iron IIA (1000–800 BCE); Iron IIB (800–701 BCE); and Iron IIC (701–586 BCE). For other well-known chronological breakouts, see Mazar's historically-based chronology ("modified conventional chronology") (2011, 105–111; 1990) and Barkay's material culture-based chronology (1992, 302–73).

seems to have been a radical alteration that started as the mere cessation of hostilities during the reigns of Asa and Omri, but would later result in a marriage alliance that would last for about two decades (c. 860–841 BCE). This alliance would continue over the course of the reigns of Ahab, Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah (Israel), Jehoram (Judah), Jehoram (Israel) and Ahaziah (Judah) with a disruption during the concurrent coups of Jehu and Athaliah in 841 BCE.

Admittedly, the available written evidence (1 Kings 22, 2 Kings 3, 2 Chronicles 17–20 and Mesha Stele) may prove too sparse or problematic for determining conclusive answers to these questions. However, in stating these guiding questions at the onset of the project (see research questions below), I hope to establish the significance of the alliance between the Omride dynasty and Jehoshaphat for reconstructing the reign of Jehoshaphat. This is particularly evident when it is considered that all of Jehoshaphat's military and political excursions recorded in the Book of Kings include his Omride counterpart.³ Therefore, my proposed attempt to re-construct the geo-political setting and impact of the reign of Jehoshaphat on the southern Levant necessarily must include a detailed discussion of the Israel-Judah alliance. This is due to the fact that it seems clear that this alliance is the most significant undergirding geo-political aspect of Jehoshaphat's reign as reflected in the Book of Kings. Therefore, while acknowledging that in the end I may not be able to conclusively reconstruct the reasons for or the nature of their alliance, I wish to use this alliance as one of the main means by which I can approach the available textual and archaeological evidence pertaining to Jehoshaphat's kingdom and his neighboring polities.

Purpose of the Book

This work will analyze the kingdom of Judah during the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. This will be accomplished in four ways: (1) by examining the biblical passages that depict his reign (1 Kings 22, 2 Kings 3,⁴ 2 Chronicles 17–20);⁵ (2) by investigating the geo-political situation of various polities of Phoenicia,

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3. Ahab versus Aram-Damascus at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:1–40), Ahaziah at the expense of Edom at Etzion-Geber (1 Kings 22:47–49) and Joram versus Moab/Mesha (2 Kings 3).
 4. Due to the constraints of space in this work, I will not provide a full treatment of 2 Kings 3.
 5. The Chronicler greatly expands his discussion of Jehoshaphat by adding an account of Jehoshaphat's military might (2 Chronicles 17), a slightly expanded account of the Battle of Ramoth-gilead (2 Chronicles 18), a description of Jehoshaphat's judicial reforms (2 Chronicles 19), and a lengthy account of a battle at Tekoa against Ammon, Moab and Meun (2 Chronicles 20). Like 2 Kings 3, due to constraints of space in this work, I will only briefly deal with the Chronicler's additions.

Aram-Damascus, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia in the 9th century BCE and the political relations between these polities and Judah; (3) by laying out the parameters, date, and effectiveness of the pact between Judah and Israel during Jehoshaphat's reign; (4) by scrutinizing the various events of the reign of Jehoshaphat through a comparison of the available archaeological material and written sources (i.e., the Hebrew Bible and Tel Dan Stele). The overall goal of this project is to provide a historical profile of the kingdom of Judah during the reign of Jehoshaphat. This profile will include an analysis of the settlement pattern, kingdom administration, and geo-political relations of Jehoshaphat's Judah.

Regarding settlement pattern and administration, an attempt will be made to compare the available archaeological data in the regions of the Central Benjamin Plateau, the Judean Shephelah, the Judean Hill country and the Negev to the passages dealing with internal aspects of Jehoshaphat's kingdom. Since most of the textual information related to these topics comes from Chronicles, special care will be needed to determine the reliability of these texts (see below for discussion on the methodological approach to Chronicles). Conversely, a broader regional approach will be used in analyzing the archaeological evidence related to geo-political relations with the surrounding kingdoms. However, I will limit this discussion, as in most cases there is not a need to establish the physical existence of the various kingdoms.

State of Research

The last quarter century has seen a large amount of literature devoted to the Omride dynasty. This literature has ranged from studies related to the biblical text (Angel 2007; BenZvi 2007; Na'aman 2008b; Robker 2012; Finkelstein and Lipschits 2010; Grabbe 2012; Sergi 2012; 2013; Bolen 2013; Finkelstein 2013b); epigraphic treatments concerning the Mesha Stele (Ahituv 2008, 389–418; Beeston 1985; Dearman 1989; Lemaire 2007b; Schade 2005 ANET 1969:287–288; COS 2003:2.137), Tel Dan Stele (e.g., Biran and Naveh 1993; Schniedewind 1996; Athas 2006; Hagelia 2006; 2009; Ahituv 2008:467–473), and Kurkh Stele (Elat 1975; Green 1979; Na'aman 1976; Yamada 2000); and archaeological investigations associated with “Omride” architecture in northern Israel and Transjordan (e.g. Ussishkin 2007; Franklin 2008b; Finkelstein and Lipschits 2010; Williamson 1996; Grabbe 2012). A considerable portion of this attention has been devoted to the kingdom of Israel during the time of Omri's son, Ahab (ca. 874–853 BCE). While the emerging picture from these varied studies is by no means conclusive or exhaustive, and there remain significant paradigmatic disagreements among biblical scholars and archaeologists

alike,⁶ it seems clear that the majority of scholarship recognizes that the Omride dynasty had a substantial geo-political role in the mid-9th century BCE southern Levant. To summarize succinctly, there seems to be general scholarly agreement that the evidence shows that the Omrides were able to use their superior geographical positioning in the hills of Samaria and the Jezreel Valley to carve out a successful dynasty for themselves through military might (e.g., Ahab's 2,000 chariots in the Kurkh Stele)⁷ and trade agreements (e.g., Tyre—1 Kings 16:31).

If Ahab's northern realm is considered "well-charted territory," then Jehoshaphat's contemporary Judah must be considered the corresponding *terra incognita* due to the relative absence of relevant epigraphic texts (except for a few instances in the Mesha Stele) and relative lack of modern excavations of major sites in the Judahite heartland.⁸ Due to this fundamental difference between the existing data related to Ahab and Jehoshaphat, most studies have avoided the archaeological and historical-geographical questions related to his reign and instead dealt with Ahab's reign through textual studies of 2 Chronicles (e.g., Albright 1950; Dillard 1986; Knoppers 1991; 1994; Klein 1995; McKenzie 2007). By comparison to the Omrides, there have been significantly fewer historical and archaeological studies related to Jehoshaphat (e.g., Blenkinsopp 1995, 1309–1319; Rainey 1998, 239–251) and seemingly no general consensus regarding Judah's geo-political status in the mid-9th century BCE.⁹ What is lacking in the discussion is an integrated

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6. For the initial disagreements on Iron Age I-II chronology see (Finkelstein 1996) and (A. Mazar 1997a). For a summary of the current positions see (A. Mazar 2011; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2011).
 7. This number may be an exaggeration, as seems to be the case for most large numbers in Neo-Assyrian king annals (e.g., Rainey and Notley 2006:200). Despite this, Israel's inclusion in the top three belligerents along with Aram-Damascus and Hamath shows that Ahab's forces, whatever their actual number, had an important part in defending the southern Levant against Shalmaneser III. Although, see Lemaire who points out that (according to his reading) the number of chariots in the Kurkh Stele are identical (2,000) to the Tel Dan Stele (1998, 9–10). He postulates that this number may include both Judahite and Israelite forces in both instances. Also see Finkelstein's positive assessment of the number in the Kurkh monolith based on the availability of copper from Khirbet en-Nahas to Omride Israel in the 9th centuries BCE (2013b, 113).
 8. Although recently renewed excavations at er-Rumeida (Hebron) may reveal helpful material when published.
 9. For instance Miller and Hayes conclude that Jehoshaphat was Ahab's vassal (2006, 220), whereas a straightforward reading of the marriage alliance as portrayed in Kings (1 Kings 22:41; 2 Kings 8:18) and reflected in Chronicles (2 Chron. 18:1) would seem to place the two on equal footing.

analysis of the textual data against the backdrop of current archaeological research of the late Iron IIA. The lack of interaction in the major commentaries and historical assessments (e.g., Yeivin 1964; Japhet 1993; Knoppers 1991; 1994; Cogan and Tadmor 1988; Cogan 2001) is largely due to new archaeological discoveries in the Judean Shephelah, Negev, Aravah, and Negev Highlands. For example, one of the most important developments is the discovery of Iron IIA Negev/Aravah copper trade and its effect upon Judah and Edom. Since most of the major works on Kings and Jehoshaphat were written before the re-analysis of Khirbet en-Nahas (e.g., Levy et al. 2004) and Timna (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012), it seems logical to attempt to fill this niche with a treatment that attempts to integrate the textual data with the most up-to-date archaeological evidence.

Research Hypotheses

Despite the above-mentioned lack of evidence, there remain two significant vistas of research related to the geo-political scene during the reign of Jehoshaphat: (1) the past regional archaeological excavations of the biblical Negev basin and the Aravah (e.g., Arad, En-Hazeva, and Beersheba) and (2) the ongoing major excavations in the Judean Shephelah (e.g., Gezer, Beth-shemesh, Tell es-Safi/Gath, Azekah, Tel Burna, Tel 'Eton and Lachish). The results of these past and ongoing excavations when compared with the epigraphic and biblical data will hopefully provide useful evidence for determining the nature of the kingdom of Judah during the late Iron IIA (9th cent. BCE).¹⁰

For example, the stratigraphic picture of Iron Age II Beersheba, Arad, En-Hazeva (Tamar?), etc. may help illuminate the significance of the maritime activity in Etzion-geber as attributed to Jehoshaphat in 1 Kings 22:48.¹¹ This particular discussion should prove effective in understanding Judah's relations with the Edomites through a comparison of the archaeological material and 1 Kings 22:47, which states "there was no king in Edom, a deputy was king." Likewise, an assessment of the Shephelah sites, such as Judahite Lachish, Tel Burna, and Tel 'Eton, as well as Philistine Tell es-Safi/Gath, may provide valuable evidence

10. Sergi's recent studies (2012; 2013, 226–246) have already started this discussion.

11. Some other sites that will likely need to be researched for Iron IIA remains along with significant Aravah-Negev trade interaction include: Aroer, Tel 'Ira, Tel Haror, Timna (Aravah), and Khirbet en-Nahas.

for determining the historicity or lack thereof of 2 Chronicles 17:10, which states “some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute.”

To conclude, when we compare scholarship’s varied interpretations of the kingdom of Jehoshaphat to the consensus of Omride established rule we are left with an imbalanced picture of the mid-9th century BCE southern Levant. The balancing of this picture will be a primary endeavor of this book.

Research Questions

What are the differences between the Jehoshaphat material in Kings and in Chronicles (see tables below)? How are we to explain these differences? To what extent can the more extensive details in Chronicles be used as a source for reconstructing the history of Jehoshaphat’s reign? I will address these questions in this introductory chapter.

Do the recorded border conflicts between the various Iron Age southern Levantine nation-states (e.g., Moab, Judah, and Israel) provide information for determining Jehoshaphat and his contemporaries’ foreign policies? If so, can the situations of Judah and Israel’s neighbors help illuminate the rationale and parameters of the Ahab-Jehoshaphat pact (2 Kings 8:26; 2 Chron. 18:1)? This set of questions will be dealt with throughout the book, but especially in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

When compared to his immediate predecessor (Asa) and successors (Jehoram and Ahaziah), how do the biblical authors categorize the reign of Jehoshaphat? Answering this question will be the focus of Chapter Four.

What role should the archaeological evidence play in reconstructing the political sphere of Judah and its neighbors in the second half of the Iron Age IIA? What was the geo-political significance of the Judahite kingdom during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the southern Levant? Does archaeology provide testimony for or against a stable, active Judahite kingdom in the mid-9th century BCE? These questions will be answered in Chapter Five.

Methodology

Before beginning our discussion of Jehoshaphat’s reign, a word on methodological approach for the books of Kings and Chronicles is in order. In general for both Kings and Chronicles, I will use a methodological approach similar to that laid out in the highly influential *A Biblical History of Israel* (Provan, Long, and Longman 2003, 3–98). In what follows, I will briefly discuss the problems in using Kings and Chronicles as a historical source.

Using Kings as a Historical Source

While there is a wide variety of scholarly opinion regarding the historical reliability of the Book of Kings, the overall consensus approach seems to be one of cautious acceptance of the general flow of events portrayed in the narratives (e.g., Cogan 2001). A detailed discussion of the various aspects of scholarship associated with Kings such as textual tradition,¹² literary structure and development, contemporary setting, underlying sources, and reception goes beyond the scope of this proposed study.¹³ Nevertheless, I shall discuss some of the issues related to using Kings as a historical source. My approach will follow the general cautious approach while paying special attention to textual critical issues related to possible variant readings that differ from the consensus in the Masoretic Text. This especially applies to variations in the Septuagintal traditions (e.g., Schenker 2010, 3–18).

As we have shown above, the comparative wealth of extra-biblical texts for this period, when contrasted to preceding periods, provides important indirect touchstones for a comparison with the direct biblical sources. The indirect sources are the Mesha Stele and the Tel Dan Stele, which were written from Moab and Aram-Damascus' perspectives during the mid-9th century BCE.¹⁴ These texts also allow for a better reconstruction of the larger political motivations of the various polities in the 9th century BCE. However, they are not without their own difficulties for historical reconstruction. Most notably, neither of these texts makes reference to the person of Jehoshaphat. Although both do refer to the dynastic "House of David" (line 9 in the Tel Dan Stele¹⁵ and line 31 of the Mesha Stele),¹⁶ this term appears to be the neighboring nations' referent for the kingdom of Judah. Moreover, these texts were written from their own perspective, which conceivably portrays their own actions in a positive light. The great value of these texts is that they can be dated to the mid-late 9th century BCE. The key distinction is that

12. For the arguments for the various editions of the so-called "Deuteronomist History" (Macchi, Römer, and Pury 2000; Römer and de Pury 2000; Cogan 2001; Römer 2007; 2013; Thomas 2014), in particular see Cohn and Knopper's treatments (2010, 107–122; 2010, 69–88), but also Adam and Leuchter (2010) and Moore and Kelle (2011, especially 312–313).

13. For a good recent systematic treatment of these various topics see various articles in Halpern et al. (e.g., Knoppers 2010, 69–88; Cohn 2010, 107–122; Millard 2010, 185–204; Halpern, Lemaire, and Adams 2010).

14. Shalmaneser's Kurkh Stele (852 BCE) and Black Obelisk (841 BCE) could also be considered to be indirect sources here, since they only make mention of Israel (Ahab, Jehu and Omri, respectively), but see Lemaire (1998, 9–10).

15. COS 2.162.

16. See Lemaire's reconstruction (1994).

these dates relate both to their occurrence and their composition. This means that they were based upon the actual thoughts of Mesha of Moab and Hazael(?) of Aram-Damascus concerning events that occurred during their respective reigns. These two texts are “eye-witness accounts” of the mid-9th century BCE, even if they are nationally charged in their conception. Moreover, the fact that these texts are biased towards their own values and actions means that they offer a unique perspective that can be compared against the equally charged and biased direct sources of Kings and Chronicles.

If the indirect epigraphic sources are problematic for reconstructing the history of the reign of Jehoshaphat, then one might be led to believe that the direct sources are a more precise foundation for reconstruction. However, Kings and Chronicles have a comparable conceptual bias to the Mesha Stele and Tel Dan Stele. This is true for Kings, but all the more for Chronicles. Unlike the Mesha Stele and Tel Dan Stele, the books of Kings and Chronicles were not written by eyewitnesses to the events that they portray. Kings in its present form must not date earlier than the mid-6th century BCE. This is clear from its final verses (2 Kings 25:27–30), which details Jehoiachin’s release from Babylonian captivity in the “thirty-seventh year of the exile” (i.e., 562 BCE). Likewise, Chronicles was written much later than the events described (c. 5th–4th century BCE) after the return from Babylonian exile (Klein 1992, 992–1002). It should be made clear that our discussion will not deal with the dating of the present composition of these books. As already stated above, my analysis will deal with the issue of whether or not the details concerning Jehoshaphat in Kings and Chronicles are reflective of earlier eyewitness sources. Specifically, 1 Kings 22:45 refers the reader to “the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” and 2 Chronicles 20:34 makes mention of “the Chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani, which are recorded in the book of the Kings of Israel.”

In this regard, these extinct texts were comparable to the Tel Dan Stele or Mesha Stele in that they preserved politically charged eyewitness accounts related to their respective kingdoms.¹⁷ Without further argumentation, I wish to state that I assume that these sources and other cited sources did actually exist (e.g., 1 Kings 14:19, 29) and were used to some extent by the biblical redactors/

17. Millard offers a lucid discussion of both the existence and the purpose of these sources in ancient Israel (2010, 155–160). He makes a compelling case that these sources are not a fabrication of 8th century BCE Judah and that they were meant to be read by the societies of ancient Israel and Judah.

editors of Kings and Chronicles (Rainey and Notley 2006, 171–74).¹⁸ Of course, the extent to which these sources were used is a critical issue for determining the reliability of their reflection in Kings and Chronicles. Additionally, a deeper issue is the historical reliability of the now-extinct sources. On a related point, Halpern and Lemaire argue for a version of Israel’s “synchronistic history” being written during the reign of Jehoshaphat. Their reconstruction would seem to make good sense with regards to a larger understanding of the flow of Israelite history. They summarize their view as follows:

In sum, it seems likely that the Israelite and Judaeen kingdoms compiled sources of various times starting at the latest from the time of Solomon, very probably from that of David, and possibly even from that of Saul. Many such texts will have been administrative in intention. Some were necessarily more synthetic. King-lists, for example, were necessary to maintain a chronology, and enforce both debt (and interest) and succession. Yet, other types of document were also incorporated: one apparently included a record of Solomon’s administration and even prefects (1 Kings 4:7–19), for example, and may have had a practical purpose of establishing state claims on certain buildings in royal towns or villages. Similarly, the records of his building activities in the capital, though practical in nature, almost certainly comported with an appreciation of the Solomonic (political) “wisdom” and, later on, an affirmation of Joash’s legitimacy (2 Kings 11), and that of his forebears. At some juncture, after the creation—perhaps under Jehoshaphat but conceivably at a later time—of a synchronistic narrative history, an extensive apology for the Nimshide dynasty was probably introduced. This occurred at earliest under Hezekiah, or perhaps under Josiah (who is also the first to condemn Solomon). It involved stories about prophetic activity and in effect support for the dynasty. This element, logically enough, focuses on a period when Aramaean overlordship most weighed on the Israelites, and ends at the dawn of Israel’s resurgence. The material, in detailing the role prophets played in the Nimshides’ preservation, leads to the period of literary editions of prophetic works, preserved in and through Jerusalem’s royal auspices (2010, 151–153).

Given all of these issues, as I have already argued above, I wish to only analyze the geo-political aspects as recorded in Kings and Chronicles,¹⁹ in order to determine if they possibly could have occurred in the period that they claim to reflect. I

18. Rainey offer a compelling reconstruction for the background of the composition of Kings and Chronicles that relies heavily on prophetic sources (e.g., 2 Samuel 24:11) (2006, 173). Na’aman also argues for prophetic source utilization in the Jehoshaphat and Omride narratives (1997b, 153–173).

19. I realize that in ancient Israel there was no “separation of church and state,” however, there does not appear to be an available point of comparison for determining Jehoshaphat’s actual cultic or administrative affiliations and practices.

exclude teaching, cultic and judicial aspects from my analysis for the following two reasons: (1) My interest lies in analyzing the significance of Judah in its contemporary 9th century BCE. (2) There does not appear to be any significant point of comparison for determining reliability with regards to these aspects. Conversely, a geo-political analysis allows for the following two points of assessment: (1) a comparison of the geopolitically related material over against the extra-biblical texts. (2) a comparison of both the biblical and extra-biblical texts against the available archaeological evidence. As I have already acknowledged, even with this nuanced scope of discussion there remain limitations in historical reconstruction.

Using Chronicles as a Historical Source

Generally, scholarly opinion has viewed Chronicles with suspicion with regard to its historical reliability.²⁰ That suspicion can be quantified in the following three assertions and accompanying conclusions: (1) Chronicles was written in the post-exilic period, hundreds of years after the events that it portrays, and was compiled relying on tradition and other written sources (e.g., Samuel and Kings), rather than eyewitness or contemporaneous accounts. Therefore, its content must be viewed as speculative or re-constructionist history with only a historical “kernel” remaining at best and outright fiction at worst, because of the large gap of time between the events and their portrayal. (2) Chronicles uses Samuel-Kings as a main source, but its audience and theme are different than that of Samuel-Kings.²¹ On account of this, the source material from Samuel-Kings should be accepted with a higher level of historicity²² than the “new” data recorded by the Chronicler.²³ (3) Chronicles places major theological emphasis on the legitimacy of the Davidic

20. For a good synthesis of the development of scholarly thought related to Chronicles and its dating, refer to Klein (1992, 1001–2) (see also Schniedewind 1999; 2005; Schweitzer 2005; Ben Zvi 2009; Duke 2009; Knoppers et al. 2009; Ben Zvi and Edelman 2011).

21. Klein points out that most scholars believe the source material of Samuel-Kings that lies behind Chronicles is the “Palestinian text of Samuel-Kings attested by Qumran mss (especially 4QSama), the Old Greek and the proto-Lucianic recensions of LXX, and Josephus” versus the MT’s Samuel-Kings (1992, 992).

22. Although even synoptic events are often reflected differently in Chronicles—e.g. compare 1 Kings 22 to 2 Chronicles 18.

23. Of special interest are the additional five successful wars of Judah that are recorded in Chronicles, which have no parallel in Kings (2 Chron. 13:3–20 [Abijah]; 14:8–15 [Asa]; 20:1–30 [Jehoshaphat]; 26:6–8 [Uzziah]; and 27:5–6 [Jotham]).

monarchy and its Jerusalemite cult and temple.²⁴ As a result, Chronicles' shaping of Israel's history is biased towards Judah at Israel's expense, and cannot be trusted for reconstructing real history.²⁵

Based on this set of assertions and conclusions, we can rightly state that the majority of biblical scholarship has concluded that the Book of Chronicles is suspect with regard to its historical content. While acknowledging the general soundness of these assertions, in light of what is currently known from archaeology, historical geography, and biblical studies (especially textual criticism), I wish to offer a fresh look at the narratives of the period in question, a look that both incorporates the aforementioned methodology (Provan, Long, and Longman 2003, 57) and is unconstrained by the assumed interpretive grid of mainstream scholarship.

Specific Methodological Approach

In accordance with what has been stated above, my methodological approach for effectively using my primary sources of Kings, Chronicles and archaeology can be broken down into the following three steps and accompanying sub-steps:

1. Interpretation and assessment of the Jehoshaphat material in Kings.
 - a. Develop a proper biblical interpretation of the relevant passages from the book of Kings, in light of how these texts would have been received by their original audiences.
 - b. Conclude the historical plausibility²⁶ or implausibility of these passages based upon their occurrence within the historical framework of the larger ancient Near East (e.g., comparison of southern Levantine chronology in 1 Kings 22:1 to the Neo-Assyrian chronology in the Kurkh Stele).

24. For a discussion of these theological themes in Chronicles and their effect upon a rebuilding Judea, see (e.g. Williamson 1977; Schweitzer 2005; Beentjes 2003, cf. 587 [who sees all of the additional wars in Chronicles as being created by the Chronicler "as a reflection of the factual military impotence of Yehud during the Persian period"]; Beentjes 2008; Jonker 2012).

25. For examples of northern negativity: the accusation of Abijah against the northern cultic practices (2 Chron. 13:4–12), the desertion of Israelite tribes to Asa (2 Chron. 15:9), and the kingdom renewal and Passover observance under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:11) and Josiah (2 Chron. 35:17–18).

26. This term is chosen here over "reliability," as no treatment of this subject could absolutely determine the factuality of the portrayed events. My goal in this analysis is not to determine if the events happened, but rather if they could have happened.

- c. Examine the events of a given passage within its surrounding context, in order to determine how the narrator connected separate events into a unified narrative. This is essential for interpreting the main theme of the narration, which then allows for further analysis of the historicity of the account (or its parts) through an understanding of the logical trajectory of the narrator.
2. Separation and assessment of the unique geo-political material in Chronicles.
 - a. Interpret the Chronicler's account of Jehoshaphat on its own terms, taking into account the authorial intent of its Second Temple period composition and reception.
 - b. Differentiate the additions, expansions and re-workings of Chronicles (see Table 1-1 on p. 17).
 - c. Distinguish between geo-political details (e.g., fortification against Israel—2 Chron. 17:1b-2) and religious details (e.g., instituting the teaching of Torah—2 Chron. 17:7-9).²⁷ It should be noted that this aspect is not meant to be completely analogous with a "source critical approach," but rather a division of the material that may be analyzed from a historical perspective over against the material that is historically undeterminable. It is certainly true that the theoretical source(s)²⁸ behind the Chronicler's narrative would have made no distinction between religious and political details for Jehoshaphat's reign. However, with the reconstructive purposes of this book outlined above, I feel justified in making this division a core element of my methodological approach.
 - d. As in Kings, determine the plausibility or implausibility of the geo-political aspects included in these passages in light of both their

27. Where this is impossible, I will seek to determine the plausibility of the geo-political events apart from their religious specifics. For example in Jehoshaphat's "worship warfare" (2 Chron. 20), I will not address whether or not Jehoshaphat actually led the people in prayer and singing against the Transjordanian foes. Instead, I will focus my attention on the whether or not 2 Chron. 20 contains a plausible geo-political event (i.e., Ammon, Moab and Meun attacking Judah at the behest of Aram-Damascus—2 Chron. 20:1) of the mid-9th century BCE. For another example of this methodology at work, see my discussion below on the interpretation of midrash and Jehoshaphat's judicial reforms (2 Chron. 19).

28. For example, in the case of Jehoshaphat, "the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" 1 Kings 22:45 and the "Chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani" 2 Chron. 20:34, if these are in fact actual historical sources.

ideological Second Temple context and their portrayed, contemporary First Temple setting.²⁹

3. Synthesis of the available archaeological data with the critiqued geo-politically driven texts from Kings and Chronicles.
 - a. Review the settlement pattern of the Iron Age IIA in the regions of Benjamin, the Shephelah, the southern Hill Country and the Negev/Aravah for any correlation with the building activity mentioned in 1 Kings 22:48–49; 2 Chronicles 17:1–3; 20:35–37.
 - b. Assess the archaeological data associated with the Philistines³⁰ and the Edomites³¹ in the Iron Age IIA to determine their political situation and possible trade connections with Judah.

The Didactic Role of the Chronicler in His Presentation of Jehoshaphat

In line with the above outlined methodology, let us briefly examine the Chronicler's usage of Judah's neighbors (2 Chron. 17; 20:1–34) and judicial reforms of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 19). These narratives are unique to Chronicles and have a clear didactic role in the theology of the Chronicler to the Second Temple audience of Yehud. This brief analysis has the following three purposes: (1) to show the general problems in reconstructing history from the Book of Chronicles with regards to its date, underlying sources, and theological perspectives; (2) to explain the didactic role of the Chronicler's portrayal of Jehoshaphat in light of its larger purposes; and (3) to illustrate that the Chronicler's account can be examined for historical contemporary geo-political realities despite these difficulties. At the end of this analysis, I have provided a table that compares the Jehoshaphat material in Kings and Chronicles.

This approach for using Chronicles as a historical source is in line with Rainey's description of his own method,³²

29. This would include an analysis of various interpretations of the Chronicler's unique material.

30. For two recent, relevant discussions on the Philistines and Judah in the Iron Age IIA see (Faust 2013, 174–204; Maeir, Hitchcock, and Horwitz 2013, 1–38).

31. The sites of Khirbet en-Nahas (Levy, Najjar, and Higham 2010, 834–847) and Timnah (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012, 31–71) have both recently revealed extensive copper activity during the Iron Age IIA.

32. See also Rainey's article (1997, 30–72) and other articles on the same subject in *The Chronicler as Historian* (Graham, Hoglund, and McKenzie 1997).

Throughout the ensuing chapters (*Sacred Bridge*), materials from the Book of Chronicles will be utilized frequently. But that material is generally of a geographical nature giving details that supplement or make better sense of the Deuteronomistic History. In other words, they are passages that one would hardly have invented from nothing. They may have historiographical exaggerations (like the million men in the troops of Zerah the Cushite; 2 Chron. 15:1–19), but the core of the narrative, with its geographical details, can often provide a significant aspect to the historical developments in particular periods. Therefore, the Chronicles' passages are utilized with no apology (2006, 174).

The Chronicler's Usage of Jehoshaphat's Neighbors

The Chronicler begins his account of Jehoshaphat's reign by describing his national reforms (2 Chron. 17:1–9); these include the following: fortifications in Ephraim,³³ Yahwistic singularity, removal of high places and *asherim*,³⁴ teaching the Law to the populace,³⁵ and accumulation of large armies.³⁶ On account of these accomplishments the Chronicler conveys that, “the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat” (2 Chron. 17:10). Specifically, we are told that “some of the Philistines and the

-
33. See discussion in Chapter Five. A strong case can be made for the historical reliability of this passage and its connection with Asa's fortifications (2 Chron. 15:8; 17:2) and Amaziah's loss of Ephraimite territory (2 Chron. 25:13), due to the occurrence of this territory in the first “Benjaminite” town-list that includes mostly cities that are north of the boundary line between Benjamin and Ephraim (cf. Kallai 1986, 340–346).
 34. These verses are not very helpful for reconstructing the geopolitical picture, as they deal primarily with the Chronicler's understanding of Jehoshaphat's cult affiliations. Interestingly, the Chronicler's “removal of the Asherim” for Asa and Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 14:3; 17:6; 19:3) may be a re-working of King's unique mentioning of the שדק with Asa and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46) with 2 Kings 23:37. In this latter passage, King Josiah is attributed with several reforms one of which connects the houses of the מִישְׁדֵּק as being next to women weaving “for Asherah.”
 35. The sending out of officials, Levites, and priests is obviously hard to confirm historically and its dating has ramifications for the dating of an earlier version of Torah (e.g., Myers 1965, 99; Knoppers 1991; 1994; Klein 1995). This discussion goes beyond our scope. “In the third year of his reign” (v.7) likely contains a piece of real historical data, as it would appear unlikely that the Chronicler would simply make up a relative year in Jehoshaphat's sequence. If this date is reliable, then it is possible to date the events in 2 Chronicles 17:10–19. This would date Jehoshaphat's diplomatic relations with “some Philistines and Arabians” to around 869 BCE (the third year from his co-reign with Asa) or 866 BCE (the third year of his sole reign).
 36. The names of the officials may be reflective of a source (2 Chron. 17:12–19), however, the large numbers of soldiers would appear to be a clear inflation (Fouts 1994; 2003).

Arabians³⁷ to the south brought tribute and gifts to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17:11). Taken at face value, this passage might lead the reader to assume that Philistia had become a vassal of Jehoshaphat; however, as we shall see in Chapter Five, the archaeological picture of the 9th century BCE shows that Philistine Gath was a dominant polity in the region (e.g., Maeir 2004; 2012). This means that it is unlikely that Philistia (especially Gath) would have been a vassal to Judah during Jehoshaphat's reign. From a literary perspective, the portrayal of Philistia's vassal-hood³⁸ to Judah seems to have accomplished two aims. First, it seems to be a clear attempt to connect the kingdom of Jehoshaphat to his depiction of the Davidic and Solomonic kingdoms, which according to the Chronicler controlled Philistine Gath (e.g., 1 Chron. 18:1). Second, the depiction of First Temple period subjugation of these nations would have had theological and instructive ramifications for the Chronicler's Second Temple audience.

Regarding the first literary aim, it should be noted that the Chronicler does limit the portrayal of the Philistines and Arabians by using the partitive⁸, which softens the wholesale interpretation of the vassal status of the confederation of Philistia.³⁹ It seems that the Chronicler is asserting that some of the Philistine cities and/or smaller border towns deemed it necessary to bring tribute to Jehoshaphat in order to placate the rising king and his expanding armies (2 Chron. 17:12–19). Whatever the case, the excavations of four of the five main cities of the Philistines—Ashdod (M. Dothan 1993, 93–102), Tel Mique/Ekron (T. Dothan and Gitin 1993; 2008), Tell es-Safi/Gath (Maeir 2012) and Ashkelon (Stager 1993, 103–112; 2008, 1578–1586)—have produced significant Philistine Iron I–IIA remains that exceed the relatively inferior material culture of contemporary Judah. While superior Philistine material culture does not necessitate enhanced geopolitical status, the vast size of the Philistine city of Gath dwarfs every Iron IIA Judahite site. This reality strongly suggests that Philistine Gath and the towns under its hegemony (e.g., Tel Harasim? Tel Zayit?) were at least on par with Judah during this period. On the other hand, as we shall see in Chapters Four and Five,

37. This is presumably a composite term referring to such peoples as the Midianites, Amalekites, Ishmaelites, etc. (cf. Gen. 37:25; Judg. 7:12).

38. On the other hand, by highlighting the “peak” of Jehoshaphat’s peace/perceived superiority to Philistia and Arabia, the Chronicler is able to expound upon the “valley” of the attacks of Philistia and Arabia against Jehoram in 2 Chronicles 21:16. Related to this literary thematic element within Chronicles, Dillard sees Jehoshaphat’s Chronicle narratives as being patterned after his father, Asa (Dillard 1986, 17–22).

39. The Philistine and Arabian tribute of 7,700 goats and rams of the Arabian tribute (2 Chron. 17:11b) simply appears to be the adding of 7,000 sheep to the 700 oxen that were sacrificed in Asa’s great sacrifice ceremony (2 Chron. 15:11).

the emerging picture of the late Iron IIA southern Levant seems to point to peaceful trade relations between Judah and Philistine Gath.

While it appears that the diplomatic relations between Judah and Philistia as depicted in Chronicles match the archaeological picture of the 9th century BCE to a certain degree, it should not be forgotten that the Chronicler was writing to a Second Temple audience that was surrounded by enemies. These enemies were from the same regions as the foreign nations that are depicted in the Chronicler's record of Jehoshaphat's reign. In light of this, it would appear that a strong Judahite king, who was feared (on account of his prayer, fasting and devotion to Yahweh) by such enemies as Arabs, Israelites, Moabites, Ammonites and Philistines, would be relevant to a contemporary Second Temple Judean audience who lived with the threat of these same locales. This consideration is particularly relevant in the Chronicler's account of Jehoshaphat's war against Moab, Ammon, and Meun (2 Chron. 20:1–24). To illustrate this point, let us compare the Chronicler's portrayal of Jehoshaphat's enemies to the list of enemies depicted in Nehemiah 4:7–9.

Table 1-1 Common Enemies of Jehoshaphat/Yehud.

Chronicles	Nehemiah
<i>“And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat. Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute, and the Arabians also brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats.”</i> (2 Chronicles 17:10–11) “After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, ‘A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar’ (that is, Engedi). Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 20:1–4)	“But when Sanballat (Israelite) and Tobiah (Ammon/Moab) and the Arabs (Arabians) and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites (Philistine) heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. <i>And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.</i>” “... do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.” When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.” (Nehemiah 4:9–15)

This similarity does not necessitate that the Chronicler's unique material cannot depict actual 9th century BCE geopolitical realities (contra Beentjes 2003), since he may have had a source that he was adapting to fit his audience (e.g., Klein 1995, 646–647 [who is mostly positivistic towards the historicity of the Chronicler's additions]; Rainey and Notley 2006, 202–206). Despite the didactic elements in the Chronicler's account of the "Battle of Tekoa," I see no reason to completely discount the historical background of 2 Chronicles 20:1–34. In fact, the inclusion of Moab (Israel and Judah's enemy), the exclusion of Edom (Judah's vassal), and the possible Aramean involvement in the affair (cf. 2 Chron. 20:2 LXX), would all seem to be possibly reflective of mid-9th century BCE geo-politics (cf. Rainey 1998). Additionally, Ofer's archaeological survey of Tekoa and the surrounding area revealed late Iron IIA remains (e.g. Ofer 1993b, site 276—Tek'ua [26 dunams], site 303—Khirbet Sib'ah [6 dunams]), including an "Iron IIA cairn" at El-Baq'a the probable location of the "Valley of Beracah" (2 Chron. 20:26) (Ofer 1993b, site 283). Despite this, the clear contemporary relevance to early Second Temple Yehud must be taken into account before deciding whether or not these narratives reflect real historical events.⁴⁰ With regards to Jehoshaphat, this principle applies to more than just Judah/Yehud's enemies. A similar didactic element may be seen in the Chronicler's discussion of Jehoshaphat's judicial reforms.

Chronicles 17:7–9 and 19—The Judicial Reforms of Jehoshaphat

Wellhausen first articulated the view that Jehoshaphat's judicial reforms were historically unreliable based on his interpretation that they were based on a midrash of his name "Yahweh judges" from the root *טפח* (Wellhausen 1885, 191; cf. Curtis 1910, 11). Conversely, Albright argued for their historical reliability based upon the inclusion of both religious and administrative details, which would have been superfluous to the Chronicler (1950, Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume:61–82; see Japhet 1993, 771–774 for more details; see also Klein 1995, 643–657, who argues for their basic historical reliability). It is certainly possible that the Chronicler's account of Jehoshaphat's judicial reform (2 Chronicles 19) and Torah teaching (2 Chronicles 17:7–9) has some historical foundation. However, it must also be observed that these passages have explicit parallels in Ezra and Nehemiah (see table on p. 19) and thus would have had clear theological and instructive relevance to the contemporary audience of Chronicles.

40. See the discussion on Moab and Ammon for more details on the "Battle of Tekoa" in 2 Chronicles 20:1–34.

Table 1-2 Common Elements of Teaching/Judging in Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah.

Chronicles	Ezra/Nehemiah
“Moreover, in Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed certain Levites and priests and heads of families of Israel, to give judgment for the LORD and to decide disputed cases. They had their seat at Jerusalem. And he charged them: “Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, in faithfulness, and with your whole heart: whenever a case comes to you from your brothers who live in their cities, concerning bloodshed, law or commandment, statutes or rules, then you shall warn them, that they may not incur guilt before the LORD and wrath may not come upon you and your brothers. Thus you shall do, and you will not incur guilt.” (2 Chronicles 19:8–10)	“And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment.” (Ezra 7:25–26)
“In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and with these Levites, the priests Elishama and Jehoram. <i>And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the LORD with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.</i>” (2 Chronicles 17:6–9)	“Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, <i>helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.</i>” (Nehemiah 8:7–8)

In this particular case, the question of the historical authenticity of these judicial reforms has minimal impact upon the recoverable geo-political character of Jehoshaphat’s kingdom. In connection with this statement, for the purposes of this book, specific religious/cultic narratives will be given superficial treatment, as my focus will remain on Judah’s positioning among her neighboring polities. Put another way, for re-constructing the political impact of Jehoshaphat’s reign it

is largely irrelevant if Jehoshaphat was “actually” as righteous or idolatrous as the biblical portrayal of the archetypes of David and Ahab.

External political successes presuppose an established administrative civic infrastructure. The former may have left tangible traces in the record (e.g., occupation or destruction levels at applicable archaeological sites), but the defining characteristics of the latter are often indiscernible due to the nature of the evidence. Furthermore, despite the lack of ability to assess the reality of the biblical portrayal of a pious, judicious, and wise Jehoshaphat, there remains the significant external evidence (archaeology and history) by which we may evaluate the plausibility of the biblical portrayal of his military and diplomatic prowess.

Comparing Kings to Chronicles

Finally, the following table is meant to serve as the starting point for my research into the sources of the reign of Jehoshaphat. The table separates the unique material in Chronicles from Kings, as well providing a short description of the various expansions or re-workings by the Chronicler.

Table 1-3 The Sources for the Reign of Jehoshaphat—Comparing Kings to Chronicles.

1-2 Kings	2 Chron.	Description	Perspective (Kings)	Perspective (Chronicles)	Additions or Exclusions in Chronicles
15:24	17:1a	Asa's death and Jehoshaphat's ascension	Judah (Asa)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	None
-	17:1b-2	Fortification against Israel in southern Ephraim	-	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
-	17:5-6	Tribute from all Judah and removal of high places and Asherim	-	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
-	17:7-9	Officials and Levites teach Judahites from Torah in the third year of reign	-	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
-	17:10-19	Tribute from some Philistines and Arabians, and description of store towns, armed forces, and fortified towns.	-	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
22:1-4	18:1-4	Ahab's invitation to Jehoshaphat to attack Aram-Damascus	Israel (Ahab)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Additions: Jehoshaphat's perspective, different dating information, and feast. Subtractions: Ahab's statement about Ramoth-gilead belonging to Israel.
22:5-12	18:5-11	Jehoshaphat's request for prophetic guidance; Ahab's 400 prophets foretell victory	Israel (Ahab)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	None

Table 1-3 The Sources for the Reign of Jehoshaphat—Comparing Kings to Chronicles. (Continued)

1-2 Kings	2 Chron.	Description	Perspective (Kings)	Perspective (Chronicles)	Additions or Exclusions in Chronicles
22:13-23	18:12-22	Micaiah's vision and prophecy of disaster	Israel (Ahab)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	None
22:24-28	18:23-27	Zedekiah's response and Micaiah's return to prison	Israel (Ahab)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	None
22:29-36	18:28-34	Battle of Ramoth-gilead (defeat)	Israel (Ahab)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Addition: Jehoshaphat's cry answered by Yahweh and abbreviation of Ahab's death scene.
22:37-40		Summary of Ahab's death, reign and Ahaziah's ascension	Israel (Ahab)	-	-
22:41	20:31a	Synchronism with the fourth year of Ahab, king of Israel	Judah (Asa)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Exclusion: In typical fashion, the Israelite regnal synchronism is excluded. ⁴¹
22:42-43	20:31b-33 (17:3-4)	Jehoshaphat's age, mother, and reign characterization	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Addition: In 2 Chron. 20:34b after finishing reproducing 1 Kings 22:41-43 and its statement that the "high places were not removed," the Chronicler adds the editorial statement "the people had not yet set their hearts upon the God of their fathers." ⁴²

41. Abijam's ascension in 2 Chron. 13:1 is the only time in which Chronicles includes this datum according to Thiele (1994, 81).
42. This was likely added to smooth over the seeming contradiction with 17:3-4.

Table 1-3 The Sources for the Reign of Jehoshaphat—Comparing Kings to Chronicles. (Continued)

1-2 Kings	2 Chron.	Description	Perspective (Kings)	Perspective (Chronicles)	Additions or Exclusions in Chronicles
22:44	18:1	Peace/alliance with Israel	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	The Chronicler mentions this at the beginning of his version of the battle of Ramoth-gilead (18:1) and excludes it from his version of Jehoshaphat's reign summation.
22:45	20:34	Citation of sources for reign	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Kings = Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah; Chronicles = Chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel
22:46	17:6	Extermination of the remnant of the "male cult prostitutes"	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Re-working ⁴³
22:47	-	Deputy king over Edom (vassal to Judah)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	-
22:48-49	20:35-37	Etzion-geber enterprise and Ahaziah's involvement	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Difference: in Chronicles Jehoshaphat was joined by Ahaziah, but in Kings he refused to join Ahaziah. Addition: Chronicles includes a denouncement from Eliezer the prophet

43. The Chronicler's "removal of the Asherim" for Asa and Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 14:3; 17:6) may be a re-working of King's unique mentioning of the אשרות with Asa and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46) with 2 Kings 23:37. In this latter passage, King Josiah is attributed with several reforms, one of which connects the houses of the אשרות as being next to women weaving "for Asherah."

Table 1-3 The Sources for the Reign of Jehoshaphat—Comparing Kings to Chronicles. (Continued)

1-2 Kings	2 Chron.	Description	Perspective (Kings)	Perspective (Chronicles)	Additions or Exclusions in Chronicles
22:50	21:1	Jehoshaphat's death and ascension of Jehoram	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	Judah (Jehoram)	None
3:4-8	–	Jehoram's invitation to Jehoshaphat to attack Moab	Israel (Jehoram)	–	–
3:9-12	–	Jehoshaphat's request for prophetic guidance—three kings (Israel, Judah and Edom) go down to Elisha	Israel (Jehoram)	–	–
3:13-20	–	Elisha's prophecy of victory over Moab	Israel (Jehoram)	–	–
3:21-25	–	The Battle of Moab/ Kir-Harsheth (victory)	Israel (Jehoram)	–	–
3:26-27	–	Mesha's immolation of his heir and Israel's return to Samaria	Israel (Jehoram)	–	–
–	19:1-4	Jehu's warning to Jehoshaphat for helping Ahab	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	19:5-11	Jehoshaphat's appointment of judges throughout Judah and in Jerusalem	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:1-3	Moab, Ammon and Meun attack Judah from Ein Gedi	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All

Table 1-3 The Sources for the Reign of Jehoshaphat—Comparing Kings to Chronicles. (Continued)

1-2 Kings	2 Chron.	Description	Perspective (Kings)	Perspective (Chronicles)	Additions or Exclusions in Chronicles
–	20:4–12	Jehoshaphat's prayer for Yahweh's protection	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:13–17	Jahaziel's prophecy foretelling Judah's victory	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:18–19	Jehoshaphat and the people sing to Yahweh in Jerusalem	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:20–21	Jehoshaphat and the people sing to Yahweh on the way to Tekoa	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:22–23	Moab, Ammon and Meun routed by Yahweh	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:24–28	Judah and Jehoshaphat plunder the camp of the enemies in the Valley of Berekah	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	20:29–30	Peace on all sides of Jehoshaphat; because of the fear of Yahweh	–	Judah (Jehoshaphat)	All
–	21:2–4	Jehoram's ascension to sole reign and murder of brothers and cousins	–	Judah (Jehoram)	All

Israel of the Omrides

One of the goals of this work is to analyze the geopolitical foreign policies of Judah's neighbors in the 9th century BCE. In order to accomplish this goal, it is important to recognize the larger international dynamic of this time, especially as it pertains to Assyria. As stated in the introduction, the first half of the 9th century BCE is the last period of southern Levantine history that is completely free from Assyrian molestation. This undisturbed period was irrevocably ended with the southern incursion of Shalmaneser III in 853 BCE against a coalition headed by Ben-hadad of Damascus, which included a certain "Ahab the Israelite" (*ab'abbū sir'ilāa*) (Rainey and Notley 2006, 199–200). Apart from its importance for absolute dating, the battle of Qarqar (853 BCE) and the subsequent return of Shalmaneser III twelve years later (841 BCE) marked a fundamental shift in Levantine geopolitics.

As stated above, our period of discussion, the mid-9th century BCE, is a period of Levantine history wherein the prevailing geopolitical framework is directly tied to relatively equal nation-states. The nation-states were largely unhampered by outside forces in their various military, diplomatic, and commercial excursions. These temporary realities make a study of the geopolitics of this period optimal for understanding the larger historical dynamic of the histories and foreign policies of the kingdoms of the southern Levant.

The task of determining the prevailing geopolitical aura of the mid-9th century BCE cannot be completed through a narrow analysis of the archaeology of

Israel and Judah in the Iron IIA (see below), nor can it be gleaned from a mere textual analysis of the various sources (see above). A synthesis of text, archaeology, and historical geography is in order. A study of the reign of Jehoshaphat would be incomplete without an examination of the other 9th century nation-states and their respective foreign policies. Understanding the geopolitical factors and motivations of each southern Levantine nation-state on the singular level will allow for a broader knowledge of the highly active and multi-national 9th century BCE southern Levant.

Due to the nature of the task at hand, a word on methodological approach and scope is in order. An exhaustive treatment of the various biblical and non-biblical events of Israel's neighbors is not the purpose of this work.¹ The primary purpose of carrying out this exercise is to provide a geopolitical profile of each of Jehoshaphat's neighbors.² Since the neighbors around Judah both shared and helped form the politics (and vice versa), it seems necessary to treat the geopolitical nature of the neighboring polities before analyzing ancient Judah. In line with this rationale, this chapter will focus on the geopolitical realities of Israel and her allies (except Judah), vassals, and enemies during the time of Ahab.

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1. For some detailed histories (of varying reconstructions) of the nations of Israel and Judah (Ahlström 1993; Albright 1957; 1963; Bright 2000; DeVaux 1965; Merrill 2008; Noth 1960; Provan, Long, and Longman 2003; Miller and Hayes 2006; Shanks 2011). For Aram-Damascus (Gordon 1952, 174–175; B. Mazar 1962, 98–120; Pitard 1982; 1987; 1996, 207–230; Lipiński 2000; Ghantous 2013; Niehr 2014). For the history of Phoenicia and its city-states (Albright 1975, 371–378; Diakonoff 1992, 168–193; Katzenstein 1997; Liver 1953, 113–120; Markoe 2000; Ward 1996, 183–206). For the still-enigmatic (yet heavily investigated) history of Philistia (Barnett 1975, 359–371; T. Dothan 1982; T. Dothan and M. Dothan 1992; Ehrlich 1996; Howard 1996, 231–251; Yasur-Landau 2010; Killebrew 2005; Killebrew and Lehmann 2013). For Ammon (DeTarragon 1992, 191–196; Herr 1993, 26–35, 68; Landes 1961, 66–86). For the somewhat scanty literature regarding the history of Moab (Daviau and Paul-Eugene 2002; Dearman 1989; 1997, 205–213; Kautz 1981, 27–35; Mattingly 1996, 317–333; 1997, 214–221; Miller 1992, 882–893; 1997, 194–204; Na'aman 1997a, 83–92). For the history of Edom (see discussion in Chapter Four) (Bartlett 1972, 26–37; 1982, 13–24; 1990; 1992, 13–19; 1999, 102–114; Hogland 1996, 335–347; Finkelstein 2005b, 119–125; Levy and Najjar 2006, 3–17).
 2. Ammon, Moab, Edom, Arabian desert tribes, Phoenicia, Philistia, Aram-Damascus, and Israel.

After the division of the United Kingdom in 931 BCE, the northern kingdom of Israel formed distinctive recognizable borders,³ which it strived to maintain until its ultimate destruction two hundred and ten years later at the hands of Assyria (722 BCE). Israel's primary heartland⁴ was the Cisjordan hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh, with its rugged Cenomanian hills, hemmed-in valleys, and east-west trade connections.

Ahab is an intriguing character in the biblical narrative.⁵ He is almost without exception maligned by the compilers of the Kings and Chronicles (save perhaps in the story of his repentance after the Naboth affair in 1 Kings 21:27–29). Ahab is “credited” with the introduction of primary Baal worship⁶ (1 Kings 16:32–33), the accursed re-building of Jericho (1 Kings 16:34), the persecution of Yahweh's prophets⁷ (1 Kings 17:1–7, 18:1–4), the failure to kill Ben-hadad at Aphek after Yahweh defeated Aram before him (1 Kings 20:31–34),⁸ the murder of Naboth the Jezreelite and the illegal seizing of his vineyard (1 Kings 21:1–15), and the ignoring of Micaiah's warnings to not go up to Ramoth-gilead to attack Aram (1 Kings 22:8–28; 2 Chron. 18:6–27). The recording of these events in the biblical text is a witness to the great lengths the compilers went to show their opinions of the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of one of the most illustrious northern kings. Despite Ahab's universally negative portrayal in the biblical text, most historians see Ahab as one of the most influential and successful kings of ancient Israel. The historical Ahab is heralded as a king who was able to take the kingdom of Israel

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3. Defined as the following: defensible border lines that enabled a particular nation-state to both govern its populace within its realm (internal), as well as protect its populace from an external military threat that might attack its heartland (see next footnote), therein destroying the fabric of its statehood.
 4. Heartland is to be defined as the land which defines a particular nation-state, or the hinterland that must be possessed by the indigenous civilization for that civilization to maintain its distinctiveness as a nation-state.
 5. 1 Kings 16:28–22:40 (written with Ahab in focus); 2 Chronicles 18 (nearly identical to 1 Kings 22:1–40 but written with Jehoshaphat in focus). For historical treatments of Ahab (Angel 2007, 3; Ben Zvi 2007, 41–53; Blenkinsopp 1995, 1309–1319; M. Cohen 1975, 87–94; Grabbe 2007; 2012, 61–83; Ishida 1975, 135–137; Lemaire 2007a, 135–144; Thiehl 1992a, 100–104; Walsh 2006; Whitley 1952, 137–152; Williamson 1996, 41–51).
 6. Replacing Yahweh in the syncretistic pantheon of Israel with Baal and his consort Asherah.
 7. Elijah and the one hundred Yahwehistic prophets in hiding under Obadiah's protection.
 8. In this instance Ahab is to be compared to King Saul (1 Sam. 15:8–9) and his mishandling of Agag and the booty of the Amalekites. Both kings had been given a mandate to destroy God's enemies (Amalek/Agag for the murdering of the helpless [Exod. 17:8–16; Deut. 25:17–19] and Aram/Ben-hadad for the misconception of Yahweh's power [1 Kings 20:23–25]) and both failed miserably according to the writers of Samuel and Kings.

to the proverbial “next level” through both clever diplomacy and superior military strength. On this understanding of Ahab, Thiehl writes the following:

The portrait of Ahab and his dynasty (the “House of Ahab”) has been negatively distorted in the OT tradition primarily because of his religious policies, which were seen as a danger to the traditional worship of God in circles loyal to Yahweh. His skillful foreign policies, which provided Israel with strength, security, and prosperity, which safeguarded peace and the balance of power, and which, finally, contributed to the (temporary) containment of Assyrian expansionism, may be inferred from the few sources that yield reliable historical data. However, his contributions in this regard were ignored in the decidedly theological perspective of the OT witnesses. The negative picture of Ahab in the OT is influenced (1) by the circles of opposing prophetic groups who transmitted the events of that time through their own biased perspective and (2) by the transitions accompanying the Jehu revolution, which put an end to the “House of Ahab.” In the judgment of later Deuteronomistic circles, Ahab was the worst of all the kings of the N kingdom (1 Kings 16:33). For them, his behavior yielded a negative criterion for the assessment of subsequent kings or groups and their fortunes (2 Kings 21:3, 13; Micah 6:16) (Thiehl 1992a).

In the face of these seemingly diametrically opposed views of Ahab, I suggest that the theological Ahab and the archaeological Ahab need not be mutually exclusive entities. The Bible acknowledges this alleged inconsistency through both the poetic and prophetic books. Perhaps no passage better emphasizes this realization than Psalm 10, a psalm which laments the success of the wicked, while foretelling the coming judgment upon such actions. Furthermore, the biblical witness to the life of Ahab actually acknowledges a great deal of Ahab’s political power and military prestige in spite of his “wickedness.” In Ahab, the reader of the Bible finds a brilliant diplomat, a cunning military leader, and an idolatrous murderer.

Political Climate of Israel During the Era of the Omrides

Ahab inherited a productive, financially well-off kingdom from his militant father Omri. This old war general and successor of Baasha’s dynasty took control of the capitals in central Samaria (first Shechem, then Tirzah), and then established his own capital at the Hill of Shemer, which he renamed Samaria (1 Kings 16:24). In addition, Omri was the first Israelite king since Solomon to reap financial rewards through an alliance with Phoenicia. This alliance was inaugurated by the marrying of Omri’s son, Ahab, with the king of Sidon’s (Ethbaal) daughter, Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31). This Israelite-Phoenician alliance hearkened back to the days of Hiram and Solomon, bringing with it enormous trade and tax opportunity.

Phoenician Alliance

The Omri-Ethbaal agreement was a natural alliance. Israel lacked decent ports and sailing expertise,⁹ attributes which Phoenicia possessed in abundance. Conversely, Phoenicia lacked sufficient wheat and barley fields in its relatively narrow hinterland, causing the seafaring nation-state to perpetually rely on outsourced foods to supply its populace, a reality that was not lost on Omri and his exceptional agricultural base in northern Israel. Additionally, the cities of Tyre and Sidon possessed intensive architectural, textile, and maritime expertise, which provided Israel the means and the method to lavish never-before-seen opulence upon the northern kingdom (Rainey and Notley 2006, 198). Despite the natural cohesion of the two nation-states, the alliance was primarily one of financial expedience and not one of military convenience. This statement is based on an overall historical understanding of the continual neutrality of Phoenicia's foreign policy.¹⁰ Additionally, Phoenicia understood the importance of choosing its enemies and allies, as Ward shows in his discussion of Phoenician tribute to various Assyrian kings. As he writes:

It is clear from the Assyrian annals that the Phoenician cities were not destroyed or even occupied by Assyrian armies until the 7th century with the siege of Sennacherib. Prior to this, amid the constant theme in the Assyrian annals of the destruction, conquest, or punishment of Aramean and north Syrian states, runs the counter-theme that tribute was collected from the Phoenician cities but they were not attacked. The distinction between the hinterland and the coast is that the small but powerful inland kingdoms presented a threat to Assyrian border security; the coastal cities did not. Furthermore, the latter provided both annual tribute and access to the rich Mediterranean commerce. Being merchants rather than warriors, the Phoenicians seem to have accepted a subordinate vassal-like role rather than threaten their far-flung shipping interests. It was a small price for semi-autonomy (Ward 1996, 188–189).

While there are no ancient texts that record Phoenician relations with southern Levantine nation-states in the 9th century BCE, it would seem probable that the Phoenicians would have acted similarly, albeit less self-disparagingly, with their

9. As evidenced by the failed “Tarshish-ship” joint venture of Ahaziah and Jehoshaphat at Etzion-Geber (1 Kings 22:48–49; 2 Chron. 20:35–37).

10. The small Tyrian force at the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE is the exception that proves the rule of the preferred neutrality of Phoenicia, as it is the first hint of Phoenician military endeavor (Ward 1996, 187).

more immediate neighbors like Israel and Aram as they would have with their later Assyrian suzerains.

In addition to the marriage alliance with Ethbaal, Omri's subjugation of Moab¹¹ and the subsequent heavy tribute Israel received through Moab's plentiful flocks (2 Kings 3:2; Mesha Stele lines 4–9) further heightened the financial advantages of the Phoenician alliance. This added element to the equation of Israel's 9th century BCE geopolitical status shows the strategic importance of the Transjordan-Mediterranean connection (either by the Jordan Valley route of Kir Hareshet-Jericho-Beth-shean-Jezreel-Phoenician ports of Acco/Tyre/Zarephath/Sidon or by the King's Highway-Harod Pass-Phoenician ports connection). Omri's eventful eleven-year reign (885–874 BCE)¹² had laid the foundation for Ahab to give Israel a level of financial success not seen since the days of Solomon. Ahab would expand upon this foundation through diplomacy, the advancement of royal administration, and military conquest.

Upon ascending to the throne, Ahab unswervingly continued his father's expansionistic policies by re-building Dan,¹³ Hazor,¹⁴ and Megiddo.¹⁵ Each of these cities had at various times been a strategic regional center¹⁶ along the International Trunk Route, and their significance to a burgeoning king and kingdom would have been self-evident.¹⁷ In this light, the Omrides building of the royal city of Jezreel¹⁸ in the Jezreel Valley stands out as a historical reality particular to

11. For a discussion of Moab's origins see (Bartlett 1969; Finkelstein and Lipschits 2011).

12. See discussion below in Jehoshaphat's regnal chronology.

13. The excavations of Tel Dan under the late Avraham Biran revealed a mid-9th century BCE fortification system including a massive dual gate complex (1994).

14. The excavations of the largest tell in Israel revealed Hazor's rebuilding on an expanded plan in the mid-ninth century BCE, which included new fortifications and a stable (Yadin 1975; Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 1998; Ben-Tor 1993; 2008).

15. While the archaeology of Megiddo in the Iron IIA is controversial, it appears that the site was definitely fortified and an important regional center during Ahab's reign (Finkelstein, Ussishkin, and Halpern 2000; 2006; 2008).

16. These sites were vital for both commercial expansion and domestic growth. They had a dual purpose: distribution and taxation.

17. For a discussion of these fortified cities in Ahab's northern Israel see Pienaar (1981, 151–157).

18. The archaeology of the once-promising site of Tel Jezreel has yielded sparse remains due to later interference (Na'aman 2008b; Ussishkin 2007; Williamson 1996; Ebeling, Franklin, and Cipin 2012). Despite its meager remnants of recoverable ancient material, Jezreel has played a large part in sparking the 10th/9th century BCE debate, squaring off the figureheads of Israel Finkelstein (Shiloh, Izbet-Sartah, Megiddo, etc.) and David Ussishkin (Lachish, Jezreel, etc.) against Amihai Mazar (former director of current Tel Rehov exca-

Ahab.¹⁹ The building of Jezreel represented an Israelite expansion outside of its local, domestic heartland (hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh south of Jezreel Valley) and into the flow and flux of the international routes of the Jezreel Valley.²⁰ The Jezreel Valley and its Transjordan connections were the core focus of Ahab's kingdom. Ahab probably realized that the control of the international routes, which ran through the Jezreel Valley (International Coastal Highway and junction of King's Highway/Transjordanian International Highway), would provide Israel with unmitigated access to trade and tax revenue through the Phoenician ports. Every later conflict between Aram and Ahab should be read with this reality in mind. In this action, Ahab's geopolitical, diplomatic ability is best displayed.²¹

Perhaps the greatest reason for Israel's success under Omri and Ahab was their forethought in choosing their opponents (Aram), allies (Judah), and non-combatants (Philistia). The absence of Israelite-Philistine conflict during the reigns of Omri and Ahab is particularly striking when one considers that Omri's rapid rise to power began when he left the battlefield of Gibbethon (Tel Malot?),²² a northern

ventions on behalf of Hebrew University), Amnon Ben-Tor (lead excavator of Hazor on behalf of Hebrew University), and the majority of current archaeological scholarship. See Finkelstein (1996, 177–187) for the seminal work on this so-called “low chronology.” See Mazar (1997a, 157–167) for the early response from the traditional view. Interestingly, given the varied opinions related to the precise dating of the Iron IIA it is important to remember that all parties agree that Jezreel was built and inhabited by the Omrides based upon a positivistic reading of the biblical text (1 Kings 4:12; 18:45–46; 21:1, 23; 2 Kings 8:29; 9:10, 15–17, 30, 36–37; 10:6–7, 11) that highlights Omride activity at Jezreel and its destruction by the usurping Jehu.

19. Jezreel under the Omrides was massively rebuilt on a new plan consistent with the architecture of Samaria in the mid-9th century BCE (Franklin 2008a, 45–54).
20. Additionally, like Jezreel, the site of Megiddo was built on a large scale during the time of Ahab—for a discussion of the synthesis of the archaeology of Megiddo see (Aharoni 1993b, 1002–1024; Finkelstein, Ussishkin, and Halpern 2008, 1944–1950). For the renewed excavation final reports see (Finkelstein, Ussishkin, and Halpern 2000; 2006; Finkelstein, Ussishkin, and Cline 2013). These two sites functioned cohesively in drawing trade off of the Jezreel Valley connecting routes.
21. Archaeological evidence and biblical synthesis for Ahab's kingdom have been chronicled thoroughly by a number of different treatments, and subsequently will not be discussed in great detail (Applebaum, Dar, and Safrai 1978, 91–100; Arie 2008, 6–64; M. Cohen 1975, 87–94; Foher 1978, 123–125; Gooding 1964; Ishida 1975, 135–137; Pienaar 1981, 151–157; Stern 1990, 12–30; Thiehl 1992a, 100–104; Zimhoni 1992, 57–70; 1997, 83–109).
22. Tel Hamid (Hebrew) is another candidate for Gibbethon. The fortified site has only been surveyed and probed, but has remains from the EB, MB II, LB, Iron I, and Iron II, along with a strong concentration in the 9th–8th century BCE, which fits the Egyptian and biblical

Philistine stronghold (1 Kings 16:15–17). It would seem that Omri, upon his triumph over his rivals, Zimri and Tibni (1 Kings 16:8–22), made a fundamental shift in Israel's foreign policy from southern military expansion to northern diplomatic, economic expansion (see discussion below) (Thiehl 1992a, 101–102).²³

Looking at the larger geo-political picture, it seems possible that the Israelite aggression against Philistia under Baasha and his son Elah was primarily an outflanking maneuver against their archrival, Asa of Judah. Seizure of the site of Gibbethon would effectively nullify Judah's only international connector, the Beth-horon ridge route. This action seems to be an attempt on the part of the Baasha dynasty to strangle Judahite trade and commerce at a point beyond Judah's control, since earlier attempts at a frontal assault on Benjamin had proven fruitless (1 Kings 15:16–21). This interpretation would cast the military stratagem of Baasha and Elah behind the siege of Gibbethon in a negative light and reveals a vengeful, shortsighted dynasty that, in spite of more pressing concerns in the north and east (Aram), persisted in attacking Judah. To Omri's credit it should be noted that the seasoned war veteran was the first Israelite king to recognize the futility of re-uniting the two kingdoms and the inherent dangers of opening another theater of war, while neglecting the more dangerous northern enemy of Aram. Omri temporarily alleviated this danger by continuing Israel's vassal status towards Aram and granting trade rights and tribute to Israel's erstwhile northern rival. This political shift is relayed in an event mentioned during the latter part of Ahab's reign in 1 Kings 20:34: "And Ben-hadad said to him [Ahab], 'The cities that my father took from your father I will restore, and you may establish bazaars for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.' And Ahab said, 'I will let you go on these terms.' So he made a covenant with him and let him go."

The former wars ("cities that my father took from your father") referred to during the treaty re-negotiation between Ahab and Ben-hadad were probably the wars between Baasha and Ben-hadad (1 Kings 16).²⁴ The wars concluded in Aram's suzerainty over Israel and bazaars (i.e., taxation centers) being set up in the

accounts (Peterson 1992, 1006–1007; Wolff and Shavit 2008, 1762–1763). Some identify Tel Hamid with a site referred to as either Gath (not Tell es-Safi/Gath), Gath-rimmon and/or Gittaim (2 Sam. 4:3; 1 Chron. 7:21; 8:13; Neh. 11:33) (e.g., Toews 1992, 1030).

23. Ironically, Jehu, like Omri (both of them usurping military commanders) before him, would follow this same policy of making peace with neighboring countries—although in Jehu's case the neighboring country was Assyria (see the "Black Obelisk") and the peace agreement was less than voluntary.
24. It is worth mentioning that there are no indications in the biblical record for the familial or tribal origins of the Omride line.

capitals of Israel.²⁵ The record of 1 Kings 20:34 makes good sense with the fluid nature of the relationship between Aram and Israel during the 9th century BCE.

Conversely, the decision to lay off Judahite aggression may have been an unpopular one among the Israelite populace. Asa, a strong Judahite king, had successfully repulsed Baasha (1 Kings 15:16–21) and had apparently taken some Ephraimite enclaves beyond Israel's southern border of Bethel (2 Chron. 15:8).²⁶ Omri's decision to focus on internal infrastructure (building of the new capital of Samaria and elimination of rivals) and external northern expansion (alliance with Phoenicia and trade agreement with Aram) highlights the changing geopolitical atmosphere between Judah and Israel in the early-mid 9th century BCE. Perhaps this was the nature of the tumultuous political scene during Omri's rapid rise to power. Omri was a leader with a new vision for Israel, whereas Zimri and Tibni may have wanted to maintain the policies of the Baashaite line, namely the continuation of Judahite aggression. Whatever the political inclinations of the various parties, Omri was able to successfully gain the trust of the people and eliminate Zimri and eventually Tibni, ushering in a new era of Israelite politics—an era characterized by political and financial stability. Ironically, the reign of Omri, the former general, was characterized by the peace he brought to Israel through diplomacy with all sides: Aram (northeast), Phoenicia (north and west), Moab (east), Philistia (southwest), and Judah (south).²⁷

25. Tirzah was the capital during the reign of Baasha (1 Kings 15:21), Elah, and part of Omri's reign before he moved it to Samaria during the last half of his reign (1 Kings 16:24).

26. The Chronicler points to continued Judahite possession of Ephraimite territory into the reign of Jehoshaphat, as can be seen quite clearly from Jehoshaphat's spiritual and judicial reforms: "He [Jehoshaphat] placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim that Asa his father had captured" (2 Chron. 17:2).

27. The lack of reference to Ammon during the reign of Omri likely indicates either Ammon's subjugation/vassal status to Israel similar to Moab or perhaps regular peaceful relations with Samaria. The question of Ammon's geopolitical status is tied to which kingdom the small, poor state was predominantly allied with in the 9th century BCE. Ammon has textually attested connections with Aram (2 Chron. 20:2 the MT and LXX reads "Aram" versus "Edom"), Moab (2 Chron. 20:1), and Philistia (earlier concerted dual front war against Israel during the period of the Judges and United Monarchy). Of these three alliances Moab had the firmest textual, historical, and geographical connection to their northern neighbors. Therefore it seems possible that Ammon was under the same vassal status as Moab during the reigns of Omri and Ahab *contra* Bright (2000, 242). Their absence from the textual record can readily be explained by their relative military and financial insignificance in the Iron IIA.

Ahab's Foreign Policy

Ahab's reign over Israel from 874–853 BCE (Thiele 1994: 94–6) continued the foreign policies set forth by his father. The Phoenician alliance stayed in place, presumably reaping substantial financial rewards for both parties;²⁸ Moab remained under complete domination of Israel (2 Kings 3:2; Mesha Stele lines 4–9); Judah (and its vassal Edom) formally became an Israelite ally through a marriage alliance (2 Kings 8:26–27); and Aram likely continued its superior status over Israel until the latter part of Ahab's reign, while Ahab reaped financial benefits and prestige in preparation for the inevitable Aramean stand-off (Rainey and Notley 2006, 199). The standoff would occur when Ben-hadad invaded Samaria in 857 BCE (1 Kings 20).

Table 2-1 Events of Ahab's Reign.

Events	Years	Enemies	Allies	Texts
Subjugation of Moab	c. 880–853	Moab	–	2 Kings 3:2; Mesha Stele 4–9
Three Year Famine	c. 860–857	–	–	1 Kings 18:1
Siege of Samaria	c. 857–856?	Aram	–	1 Kings 20
Battle of Aphek	c. 856	Aram	–	1 Kings 20
Battle of Qarqar	853	Assyria	Aram, Ammon other Aramean States	Kurkh Stele II 90b–97
Three Years of Peace	856–853	Aram	–	1 Kings 21:1
Battle of Ramoth-gilead	853	Aram	Judah	1 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 18

It seems that the marriage alliance between Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel was a final admittance of the impossibility of a “United Kingdom” renewal between Israel and Judah. Up until this point, it seems both parties had been reluctant to make peace in hopes for re-unification, as can clearly be seen in the reigns of Rehoboam and Asa of Judah and Jeroboam and Baasha of Israel. The agreement reached between Jehoshaphat and Ahab meant that both parties

28. The rebuilding of the sites of Dan, Hazor, Megiddo, Jezreel, and Samaria during the time of Ahab all point to the great profits earned in their alliance.

recognized one another's legitimacy as a separate state with recognizable distinctions and borders. Nevertheless, one could argue that by combining the separate entities of Israel and Judah in the 9th century BCE the two polities reached and likely surpassed the apex of the United Kingdom from a material culture standpoint (see discussion below on the archaeology of Judah in the late Iron IIA).

Perhaps the best way to accurately judge the kingship of Ahab is to summarily access the abilities of his successors. In the fourteen years of the reigns of his two sons, Ahaziah (853–852 BCE) and Joram (852–841 BCE), Israel lost its sovereignty over Moab and suffered multiple defeats at the hands of the Arameans. At this juncture, it will be helpful to discuss the foreign policies of Israel's most immediate neighboring nation-states—beginning with her ally, Phoenician Tyre and Sidon.²⁹

Phoenicia

For nearly the entirety of the Iron Age,³⁰ the northern coast of Canaan was controlled by a group of seafaring traders commonly known as the Phoenicians (Ward 1997, 313–314).³¹ Forced to live along the Mediterranean coast due to the uplifted, rugged ranges of the Lebanese and Anti-Lebanese mountains,³² the Phoenicians created and monopolized international sea trade, acting as one of the primary modes of the proliferation of Levantine material culture. The harbor cities like

29. Aram-Damascus has not been detailed, because its foreign policy with relation to Israel and Judah has been sufficiently discussed above and below.

30. In the preceding Middle and Late Bronze Ages (1950–1200 BCE), the region that would later be known as Phoenicia was often under the direct influence of Egypt, as it was Egypt's primary supplier of timber (Peckham 1992, 354). In discussing the transition from Egyptian domination to city-state independence, Peckham writes: "Coastal Canaan was no longer an Egyptian province but a conglomerate of maritime powers on the verge of discovering a new world." For a good periodization of Phoenician history, see Ward (1996, 185). The period of our discussion is Ward's second phase (876–332 BCE).

31. For a good treatment of Phoenician history and sources, see Peckham (1992, 349–357); and Katzenstein (1997).

32. The total lack of good natural harbors in southern Canaan (lack of mountains descending to the coastline) heightens the importance of Phoenicia's natural harbor cities (large mountains forming ridges along the coast—i.e., "the ladder of Tyre"). This major geographical "plus" is slightly mitigated by the near-total lack of arable land in the Phoenician hinterland.

Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos acted as the sea portal to both the Levantine coast and eventually the larger Mediterranean world.

City-States of Phoenicia

The northern coast of Canaan was controlled by a several large “city-states,” most prominent of which were the harbor cities of Byblos, Tyre and Sidon (Ward 1997, 313). This polity was one of the continuations of the flourishing pre-Israel, Canaanite governmental structure that began in the Middle Bronze Age (Peckham 1992, 354; Gilboa 2005, 49–50) and was extinguished in the Late Bronze II/Iron I with the arrival of the Sea Peoples and Israel and the formation of nation-states. The Canaanite city-states of northern Canaan (i.e., the Phoenicians) continued along the same trajectory as the Middle Bronze II–Late Bronze II culture that predated the arrival of the Philistines and Israelites (Ward 1996, 184).

Phoenicia’s international prominence in the mid-first millennium is best described by the 6th century BCE prophet Ezekiel’s “lamentation for Tyre”: “The word of Yahweh came to me: ‘Now you, son of man, raise a lamentation over Tyre, and say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrances to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands, thus says the Lord GOD: “O Tyre, you have said, ‘I am perfect in beauty.’ Your borders are in the heart of the seas; your builders made perfect your beauty” (Ezek. 27:1–4).

Allies of Phoenicia

Israel, Phoenicia’s most immediate southern neighbor, was a natural ally, often acting as Phoenicia’s “breadbasket” with its large, arable valleys. Clear examples of this alliance can be seen in the reigns of David, Solomon, and Ahab (10th–9th century BCE). In the absence of textual data for the rest of Israelite history, it seems safe to assume that relations between Israel and Phoenicia remained strong throughout their respective histories. Quite simply, there was no reason for Phoenicia or Israel to encroach upon one another’s hinterlands, as Phoenicia’s expansion points were seaward and Israel’s landward. This dynamic can also be applied to Aramean-Phoenician relations, as Aram had a great interest in currying the same favor that her rival Israelite monarchs enjoyed.³³

Judah—The ties between Jerusalem and Tyre stretched as far back as David. There is no reason to believe that these relations would have become hostile.

33. As previously indicated, this reality undergirds the Aramean invasions during the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 20).

However, it seems probable that except for times of Judahite prosperity (United Kingdom, Jehoshaphat, and Uzziah), Phoenicia would have no interest in major Judahite assistance (i.e., higher profit cuts, maritime expertise, ivory craftsmanship, building assistance), as it neither furthered Phoenician interests nor helped relations with Judah’s sporadically morphing enemy fronts. This does not mean that relations between Judah and Phoenicia were ever poor. Phoenicia was a merchant and would have had no desire to alienate any potential customer or supplier, as made evident in Ezekiel 27:17: “Judah and the land of Israel traded with you [Tyre]; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, meal, honey, oil, and balm.” Ezekiel 27 represents a picture of Tyre that goes well beyond its contemporary horizon (beginning of the 6th century BCE). This passage is a lament over Tyre’s coming destruction and depicts its commercial relations both as it was at that particular time and as it had been previously throughout Tyre’s existence. Therefore, we can safely deduce that Judahite-Phoenician relations ranged from perpetual trade partners to allies while never becoming hostile.³⁴

However, being successful merchants likely meant providing aid to their well-fortuned allies, while denying aid to the unfortunate enemies of their wealthy allies. Specifically, Phoenicia might not have wanted to jeopardize more fortuitous relationships with more commercially connected nations, such as Israel or Aram, by allying itself to the inferiorly connected Judah. Based on this logic, I propose the following conjectural reconstruction of Phoenician foreign policy from the beginning of the 10th century to the mid-9th century BCE.

Table 2-2 Phoenician Foreign Policy Towards Israel/Judah: 980–841 BCE.

c. 980–931 BCE	931–880 BCE	880–841 BCE
Alliance with the Davidic kingdom and Hiram of Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1–12; 9:10–14, 26–28; 2 Chron. 2:3).	Perhaps an ally of Damascus as Israel and Judah contended with one another throughout this period and Damascus grew strong at the expense of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 15:18–20).	Ally of Omride Israel (1 Kings 16:31)—later an ally of Judah (ca. 853–841 BCE) represented by their providing aid (Tarshish-ships) for Red Sea navigation (1 Kings 22:48–49; 2 Chron. 20:35–57).

34. At the very least, there is no textual evidence that points to a hostile relationship at any point.

Directly related to this reality is Phoenicia's relationship to Philistia. It would seem that the Philistine coastal cities (Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza) functioned as "transitional" port cities through which traffic from the Arabian Peninsula, Edom, the Red Sea, the Negev, Egypt, and at times Judah would be filtered to the major port cities of Tyre and Sidon. Ancient maritime activity was relegated to "coast-hopping," because they did not possess the ability to brave the frequent storms and turbulence of the open Mediterranean waters.³⁵ Evidence of Philistine-Phoenician relations is particularly evident in the western Jezreel Valley (near Phoenician territory in the plain of Acco), as nearly every excavated and surveyed Iron Age site reveals Philistine pottery (Raban 1991, 17–27).³⁶ These Philistine port cities were important "spokes" on the Levantine wheel in which the cities of Tyre and Sidon sat as the hub. There is an abundance of literature written on Philistine-Phoenician connections,³⁷ however, the overwhelming majority of these works merely deal with the arrival and initial settlement of the Sea Peoples and their subsequent relationship to the Phoenicians. While it is true that the high point of this relationship was in the Iron I, these realities continued to shape the landscape of the Iron Age Levant during the time of the Israelite and Judahite monarchies (Ben-Shlomo, Shai, and Maeir 2004). The reality between this connection has been conclusively demonstrated in the archaeological record of Iron II Philistia and Southern Phoenicia (Gilboa 1989, 1999, 2005, 2012; Gitin 1998; 1990; Gilboa and Sharon 2003; Singer-Avitz 2010; Tammuz 2011). For the best textual connection to Philistine-Phoenician relations in the Iron Age, we must return again to the "Lament of Tyre" in Ezekiel 27. "The men of Dedan traded with you. **Many coastlands were your own special markets** [emphasis mine]; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony" (Ezek. 27:15). By the beginning of the 6th century BCE, Philistia had ceased to exist in its previous form and had become part of the Babylonian empire both physically and culturally (Katzenstein 1997, 328). Nevertheless, it seems probable that this reference is at least including the Philistine coastline if not referring directly to it. It would seem that the dynamic of Philistine-Phoenician relations was one of continual supply that brought the Negev and Wilderness trade routes to the great port cities of Phoenicia through

35. For a discussion of late Iron Age Philistine-Phoenician trade relations see Master (2003, 47–63), which relates this larger dynamic to the specific situation of 7th century BCE Ashkelon.

36. Raban is primarily showing the Philistine-Jezreel connection in the Iron I and Iron I/II transition (12th and 11th centuries BCE) by relating the archaeology to such texts as Judges 3:31; 5:6–7; 1 Samuel 31:7; ANET 262 (Raban 1987; 1991, 24).

37. For example see (Albright 1975; T. Dothan and M. Dothan 1992; Gilboa 2005).

the minor port cities of Philistia. This dynamic will be further examined from Judah's perspective in our discussion of Jehoshaphat's Judah.

Summary of 9th Century BCE Foreign Policy of Phoenicia

Phoenicia, realized that war and poor diplomatic relations with its neighbors equaled a significant drop in commerce. Therefore, Phoenician foreign policy can simply be defined as the pursuance of peace with all of its potential customers, consumers, and suppliers. The 9th century BCE is a good example of this overarching policy.

Ammon

The Ammonite Basin has unpredictable weather patterns and limestone of the Senonian and Eocene varieties, which provide mostly poor water storage and fewer springs than the Cenomanian limestone of Gilead. The topographic setting of Ammon greatly influenced its history.

Capital—Rabbah

Ammon was a nation-state of poor frontier borders,³⁸ but good interior borders. Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, was the only part of Ammon that possessed any military, strategic strength. Topographically, the “Citadel” was an up-lifted city with three deep wadis surrounding it and a small, narrow ridge approaching it—an

38. The northern and western borders of Amman offer an imperceptible rise to the dome of Gilead (except at the Jabbok River). The region of Gilead possessed better soil and pasturelands of the Cenomanian/*terra rosa* variety versus the Senonian/Rendzina of the Ammonite Basin (Baly 1974, 227–228). This area was predominantly fought over during the period of the Judges (Ehud vs. Eglon; [Judg. 3] and Jephthah vs. Ammon [Judg. 11]) and United Monarchy (Jabesh-Gilead's conquering [1 Sam. 11–12] and David's wars against Ammon [2 Sam. 8:2–12, 10–12; 1 Chron. 19, 20:1–3]), and must have been an unmentioned military objective throughout the rest of Ammonite history. South of Rabbah is an imperceptible rise to the Medeba Plateau, which seems to have been controlled predominantly by Moab, Judah, and Israel throughout the Israelite period. However, Medeba possessed important farmland and east-west routes that Ammon would have coveted, making it a natural, albeit unattested textually, expansion point. Finally, the east led to the vast Arabian Desert, which was susceptible to desert raids. For more information on the territory of Ammon see (Baly 1974, 227–228).

ideal capital city comparable to Kir-hareshet of Moab and Bozrah of Edom (Baly 1974: 226). It was the strength of Rabbah that allowed the Ammonites to make military campaigns. If Rabbah did not exist the Ammonites would have had no defensible line and most likely would have not existed at all in the land known as Ammon.

Allies and Enemies of Ammon

The nation-state of Moab was a natural ally to its northern neighbor. Both of these countries had much to gain in opposing Israel and Judah—better hill country in Judah and Israel with access to the International Coastal Highway—and little to gain from opposing one another. Together these two nations could theoretically form a strong barrier against Israelite and Judahite penetration into Transjordan, with Moab being the stronger of the two. Likewise, the Arameans, particularly those of Damascus, often aided Ammon and Moab in providing a strong line of defense against Israelite and Judahite aggression into the Transjordan tableland and protection against Israelite seizure of the Transjordan International Highway (e.g., 2 Sam. 10; 1 Chron. 19;³⁹ 2 Chron. 20; Mesha Stele⁴⁰).

From as early as the Davidic kingdom (1011–971 BCE), the kingdoms of Aram-Damascus, Moab, and Ammon shared similar interests, namely that of curbing the rise of the Israelite/Judahite monarchs in the region (2 Sam. 10). The 10th century BCE saw the birth of the Aramean kingdom of Damascus,⁴¹ and with it the real power player behind Israelite/Judahite aggression. The three nations shared a common enemy, Israel, who was a threat to each of their interests on the Transjordanian International Highway due to the Omride subjugation of Moab

39. While the nation-state of Aram-Damascus (and the Ben-hadads) had not yet arrived on the scene during the reign of David, Ammon's alliance with the Arameans of Zobah and Hamath is representative of the natural strategic advantages of an alliance between the Transjordanian nation states and the Syrian Aramean nation states.

40. Depicts Mesha of Moab restoring Moabite interests in Medeba, this likely occurred in conjunction with Hazael's seizure of Transjordan (2 Kings 10:33) (Bolen 2013). The rebuilding would have likely been well known to Aram and Ammon, Moab's allies (Rainey 1998, 239–251).

41. See the following recent treatments on Aramean-Israelite interaction (Lipiński 2000; 2006, 203–224; Niehr 2014).

(2 Kings 3:1; Mesha Stele line 1)⁴² and perhaps Ammon (see above),⁴³ his alliance with Phoenicia (1 Kings 16:1), and his deep desire to possess the tableland of Bashan, including the area around Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 8:28; 2 Chron. 18). This common enemy united these three kingdoms in an alliance.

The best example of this alliance is seen in 2 Chronicles 20:1–2, which records that a coalition of Ammonites, Moabites, and Meunites⁴⁴ came against Jehoshaphat's Judah immediately after the Battle of Ramoth-gilead. These forces are said to have come *απο Συρτας* (LXX) or *מֵאֲרָם* (MT). Many translations follow a later textual emendation to *מֵאֲדָם* and interpret the passage as locative—"from Edom." Rainey has argued that this passage should not be emended, but translated per the MT and LXX, therein showing that Aram was the instigator of the entire affair (Rainey 1998; Rainey and Notley 2006, 202–203). Also, seeing the events of 2 Chronicles 20 as primarily an Aramean "police action" against Judah⁴⁵ (due to its participation against Ben Hadad's forces) helps explain the confusion and rapid dispersion of the three partners. While questions surrounding the historical reliability of 2 Chronicles 20 remain (Japhet 1993, 780–799), Rainey's basic interpretation of the geo-political realities, at least is a commonsensical approach to a problematic passage.

42. Moab viewed Israel through the same hostile lens as Ammon. Israelite/Moabite relations often resulted in violence (Judg. 3:12–30; 2 Sam. 8:2; 2 Kings 3; Mesha Stele). This is particularly the case during the reigns of Omri/Ahab and Mesha when an Omri-led incursion into Medeba resulted in the subjugation of Moab and the heavy tribute of Moab's herds (2 Kings 3:4). Similarly, Judah, while not being a primary threat to Moabite interests, had several reasons to clash with Moab. The following define some of the reasons for their conflict: (1) Edomite vassalhood under Judah in the 9th century BCE (1 Kings 22:47); (2) Judahite encroachment into Medeba (Davidic altars; Mesha Stele line 1a); and (3) memories of Davidic subjugation and slaughter of Moab (2 Sam. 8:2).

43. Ammon's archenemy was the northern ten tribes of Israel, of whom three of their tribes (half of the tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad; Num. 32) possessed land on their northern and western borders.

44. Additionally, Ammon and Moab allied themselves with the Meunites, a volatile Aravah desert tribe who longed for control of the Bozrah-Gaza trade routes, which were possessed predominantly by the Edomites, Judahites, and Philistines.

45. Subsequently, Ammon opposed Judah largely due to their alliance with Israel. This was particularly the case during the ninth century (2 Chron. 20). Ammon's alliances with Moab and Syria kept them in constant conflict with the kingdom of Judah, despite the fact that there was little Ammon desired from Judah's hinterland.

Summary of 9th Century BCE Foreign Policy of Ammon

Ammon was incapable of mounting large campaigns on its own due to its lack-luster homeland. However, since Ammon's natural resources (Rendzina soils and commerce off of the Transjordanian International Highway) were largely insufficient for its economic needs, the Ammonites were forced to expand their borders. To do so, they may have allied themselves with anyone who was against Israel and Judah in order to gain the arable land of Gilead and Medeba. When these alliances faltered, Ammon would abandon its ally. This can be inferred from their absence during the allied invasion of Moab in 2 Kings 3.⁴⁶ Ammon was simply too weak to survive without expanding, but also too weak to expand.⁴⁷

Moab

The kingdom of Moab, which was situated directly east of the Dead Sea along the Transjordanian International Highway, sometimes prospered,⁴⁸ often declined,⁴⁹ but mostly survived throughout its history.⁵⁰ The Moabite heartland consisted

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46. Edom, the one dissenting faction of the Transjordan kingdoms, only came into conflict with Ammon and Moab because of its vassal status with Judah (1 Kings 22:48). The 9th century alliance was largely a historical abnormality, and relations between Ammon/Moab and Edom seem to have been for the most part peaceful.
 47. Despite their precarious positioning, it is worth noting that Ammon was the only Transjordanian nation-state that was able to retain some of its national identity in the Second Temple Period, as seen particularly in the Tobiad family and their great palace of Tyre (Iraq-el-Amir) (Eskenazi 1992, 585; DeTarragon 1992, 194–195).
 48. For example, territory lost to Sihon, king of Heshbon in the pre-Transjordan conquest (Num. 21:26) Eglon ruling at Jericho (Judg. 3), Mesha (2 Kings 3; Mesha Stele), and 8th century BCE expansion (Isa. 15).
 49. For example David/Solomon (2 Sam. 8:2; 1 Chron. 18:2), Omri/Ahab (Mesha Stele; 2 Kings 1:1, 3:4–5), Jehoshaphat/Jehoram (Ahab's son; 2 Chron. 20; 2 Kings 3).
 50. There may be a connection between the “rulers of the Shūtu” that are mentioned in the Execration texts (18th century BCE) and the “Sheth” mentioned with the Moabites in Num. 24:17–18 (Miller 1992, 882–893). The end of Moabite history is even harder to nail down, in that there is no definitive end. From the available written evidence it would seem that Moab slowly lost its specific material culture from its loss of independence at the hands of the Assyrians in the eighth century BCE through the Roman period, as made evident by the writings of Josephus (e.g. *Ant.* 13.13.5 §374).

of the relatively flat territory between the Nahal Arnon and the Nahal Zered⁵¹ (Baly 1974, 230–231). While the thin soil and insufficient springs of this plateau only allowed the growth of cereal crops, this was the perfect locale for the abundant flocks of Moab. In times of strength, Moab would stretch its hegemony over the Medeba Plateau, a region that was often hotly contested among its three surrounding nation-states (Baly 1974, 229). The Medeba Plateau, unlike the heartland of Moab, offered two strategic advantages for its possessor: 1) good agricultural land and 2) control over an intersection of routes leading into the Jordan Valley, Ammon, Arabia, and Aram.

Capitals—Kir-Hareshet and Dibon

Since Moab and Ammon's enemies and allies are virtually identical, this section will only discuss Moab's specific geographical positioning.

Kir-Hareshet (also known as Kir [e.g., Isa. 15:1]), sitting in the midst of the Moabite Plateau, surrounded by wadis heading down to the Dead Sea, was the main capital of the Moabites and an important defensible stopping point along the Transjordan International Highway.⁵² Kir's geographical setting is nearly identical to that of the capitals of its Transjordanian neighbors Bozrah (Edom) and Rabbah (Ammon). This important city was the natural capital of Moab regardless of northern expansion into Medeba. Additionally, Dibon, which is slightly north of the Nahal Arnon, acted as the main capital of Mesha (Mesha Stele line 1). Mesha moving the capital from Kir to Dibon can be compared to David moving the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5). Like David, Mesha may have been concerned with placating his mixed northern populace while not completely alienating his core. The existence of a northern capital should not be seen as an attestation that Mesha was merely a northern tribal leader over the region north of the Arnon (Miller 1992, 890); rather the reference to Dibon in the Mesha Stele, in conjunction with the invasion into southern Moab and the besiegement of Kir-Hareshet in 2 Kings 3, shows that Mesha was no mere regional monarch.

51. Despite its relative topographic simplicity, the region is exceptionally diverse geologically. The region is made up of Senonian and Cenomanian limestone, Nubian sandstone, and volcanic basalt (cf. Baly 1974, Geological Map).

52. From Kir-Hareshet one could also traverse east across the breadth of Moab to connect with the Wilderness Route, which is most well known as the route taken by Moses and the Israelites (Num. 21:11).

Summary of 9th Century BCE Policy of Moab

Moabite and Ammonite national interests were quite similar, which meant that their foreign policies were nearly identical. However, Moab's slightly better geographical setting allowed for advantages both in terms of commerce and defensible positioning (30 km of territory protected by Arnon-Zered vs. Rabbah only protected by close wadis). The primary goal of Moabite foreign policy was establishing their control over the Medeba plateau.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide the historical background of Omride Israel and contemporary Phoenicia, Ammon and Moab. This has been accomplished through a cursory analysis of each of these polities geographical position and a discussion of the relevant texts, which shed light upon their geo-political situation. The purpose of this “background” chapter was to lay a foundation for our discussion of the text and historical realities of Jehoshaphat. With Israel and her neighbors’ foreign policies discussed, we will now turn our attention to textual sources associated with Jehoshaphat’s reign (Chapters Three and Four).

The Battle of Ramoth-gilead in 1 Kings 22:1–36, 2 Chronicles 18, and Historical Implications from the Tel Dan Stele

The first matter that demands our attention are the written sources that relate to the mid-9th century BCE. In the present chapter, we shall examine the Battle of Ramoth-gilead in the book of Kings, Chronicles, and its relationship to the Tel Dan Stele. The next chapter will focus on Jehoshaphat's reign as depicted in 1 Kings 22:41–50. After treating the primary source, we shall conclude with a chapter (Chapter Five) discussing the archaeological material related to the mid-9th century BCE (i.e., the Late Iron IIA).

My goal in studying the history of Jehoshaphat is to create a possible reconstruction of the events using the historiographical and archaeological evidence. Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, my reconstruction can only be one of many possible interpretive reconstructions. Of course, it is my sincere hope that my reconstruction of the events portrays actual history. However, I am completely aware that nearly three millennia separate our day from that of Jehoshaphat's and there exist major hurdles in using the various types of evidence for positive reconstruction. Therefore, my conclusions must remain flexible to account for interpretations that may later be annulled by new evidence. With these principles and nuances in mind, let us begin our assessment of the book of Kings' portrayal of Jehoshaphat.

The Battle of Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:1–36)

The battle of Ramoth-gilead is recorded within the framework of the narrative of Ahab's reign (1 Kings 16–22). It is written from Israel/Ahab's perspective, which means that if it originates from an earlier source, then that source would be related to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (1 Kings 22:39) or a similar Israelite source, that would have been available to the writer of Kings. The principal nations involved in the battle are Aram-Damascus, Israel and Judah. As far as a literary structure, the passage may be outlined as follows:

- 22:1–4—Ahab's invitation to Jehoshaphat to go to war against Ramoth-gilead
- 22:5–12—Prophetic prediction of victory (Zedekiah and 400 other prophets)
- 22:13–28—Prophetic prediction of defeat (Micaiah)
- 22:29–36—The battle of Ramoth-gilead
- 22:37–40—Ahab's reign summation¹

In general, our textual analysis will deal primarily with Ahab's invitation (22:1–4) and the actual record of the battle of Ramoth-gilead (22:29–36). The other three elements are significant in their own right, particularly 22:5–36 for understanding the role of ancient Near Eastern prophets in the royal court.² Despite this, the primary purpose of these prophecies was to show Yahweh's hand in bringing judgment on Ahab.³ There is a clear parallel between Elijah's pronouncement in 1 Kings 21:19 of the "dogs licking your blood" and its fulfillment in Ahab's reign summation that follows the battle scene (1 Kings 22:38).⁴ Therefore, this section

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1. See 1 Kings 16:29–34 for Ahab's reign characterization. We will not deal with Ahab's reign summation in this study.
 2. Note the interesting parallel between the kings seated on thrones in Samaria (22:10–12) and Yahweh seated on his throne in heaven (22:19–22). Both sets of "kings" are seated on a throne, are arrayed in their royal vestments, all of their ministers are present for service, and both ask a question from their ministers that is answered by a minister who will lie to Ahab.
 3. This judgment is brought on negatively via the "lying prophets" (22:5–12) and positively through the truthful Micaiah (22:13–28).
 4. The rest of Ahab's pronouncement includes: (1) the killing of every male (both slave and free), (2) the total destruction of his dynastic house (i.e., Omrides), (3) Jezebel would be eaten by dogs within the walls of Jezreel. (4) anyone loyal to Ahab would either be eaten by dogs or birds (21:20–24). All of these are explicitly fulfilled in Jehu's bloody coup in 2 Kings 9–10. For a recent treatment of some of the issues related to this prophecy see Foreman (2015).

has a literary connection to both the preceding and following sections in Kings, all of which have a theological message and are not “chronistic” in nature.

On account of this, our analysis will deal only with the texts that make reference to international affairs, which I conclude to be 1 Kings 22:1–4, 29–36. The thrust of this theological message for a 6th century BCE Judahite exiled reader would have been clear. Yahweh brought destruction to Ahab’s line, because of his nationally imposed worship of Baal via Jezebel. On this point, it does not strain the evidence to state that Jehu’s court officials (i.e., sympathizers) would have had a similar negative take on the Omrides. Of course, this presupposes that actual Yahwistic worship existed in ancient Israel (i.e., the northern kingdom).⁵ It is dangerous to hypothesize, but if this original source (or sources) does derive from an original Israelite source the period following Jehu’s coup (841 BCE) makes for an intriguing possibility, as Jehu’s court officials would have had no qualms about portraying the Omrides in a negative light. There are various opinions on the background of these narratives. DeVries separates the story into two narratives one related to the last Omride Kings and the other related to Hezekiah (1985, 265–266; Shearing 1992, 810). Miller and Hayes believe that the battle report is reflective of the time of Jehoahaz (2006, 253; 299–302). From a geopolitical perspective, these views are possible, but ultimately unnecessary, as there is good archaeological evidence (e.g., Iron IIA fortifications at Tell er-Rumeith) that shows Israelite and Aramean conflict in Transjordan during the time period in question (Finkelstein, Lipschits, and Sergi 2013; Bolen 2013, 206–216). With the above serving as an introduction to the conflict let us now deal with the text of 2 Kings 22:1–36.

1 Kings 22:1–2

At the onset of this narrative, the writer of Kings gives the chronological setting of the campaign with two pieces of relative dating. “For three years Aram and Israel continued without war, but in the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.” The “three years” of peace refers to the cessation of war between Aram and Israel discussed in 1 Kings 20:31–34. This third year when “Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel”⁶ likely relates to

5. For good evidence pointing to the existence of Yahwistic worship in Israel see Greer’s recent treatment of the faunal remains of the “high place at Dan” (Greer 2010; 2013).

6. There is a prevailing opinion among several scholars that the presence of the unnamed “king of Israel,” Ahab and Jehoram in 1 Kings 22:1–36 and 2 Kings 3:4–26, means that the kings of Judah and Israel were anonymous in the original story (Finkelstein 2013b, 121–125; Miller and Hayes 2006, 297–302; Miller 1966, 441–454), which lead them to conclude that

853 BCE based on Israel and Aram's joint efforts against Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar (Kurkh Stele). The three peaceful years of 22:1 would then relate to 856–853 BCE. The rationale for achieving these two dates is related to the regnal chronology of Ahab (874–853 BCE) (Thiele 1994).

1 Kings 22:3–4

The regional significance of Ramoth-gilead⁷ is related to its prominent location on Transjordanian International Highway that runs north through the Syrian tableland/Gilead and south into Ammon and the eastern tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. The exact sequence of Israel's previous holding of the site is unclear, although some suggest that the site was lost during the campaigns of the Ben-hadad in 1 Kings 20 (Arnold 1992b, 621–622). The significance of the site is also illustrated by the continued battles over the site during the days of Ahab's son, Jehoram, who re-claimed the site from the Arameans (2 Kings 8–9).⁸ Of utmost significance to our present discussion is Jehoshaphat's response to Ahab's question, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."⁹

these battle sequences were reflective of various other battles and not the battles that they portray. While this is a possibility, the inclusion of the generic title alongside the proper name of each king could just as easily be explained as literary variety and not a particular source marker. Given the basic correlation between the archaeological data and the extra-biblical textual data with the biblical data in Kings this conclusion seems unnecessary.

7. The two sites normally identified with Ramoth-gilead are Ramtha (modern city) and Tell Rumeith. Glueck identified the latter based on archaeological and toponymic evidence (1943, 10–16). Although see Finkelstein et al. (2013, 7–23) who point to the site's geographical significance, existence and fortifications in the late Iron Age IIA but deny that it was the city of Ramoth-gilead due to its small size. Wherever the site is to be found, it appears to be one of the more significant cities in Gilead (cf. Josh. 21:38; 1 Chron. 6:80).
8. The time period of the so-called "Aramean Oppression" and the concurrent coups of Jehu and Athaliah in 841 BCE goes beyond the scope of this discussion. However, several recent treatments have discussed this period in depth (Bolen 2013; Robker 2012; Na'aman 2006; Stith 2008).
9. This formulaic statement is repeated with Joram (2 Kings 3:7), but not in association with Ahaziah of Israel. Several scholars have pointed to Ruth's statement to Naomi (Ruth 1:16–17) and Ittai's to David (2 Samuel 15:21) as other examples of formulaic expressions of submission (e.g., Frymer-Kensky 2008, 241; J. L. Wright 2014, 110–112). However, in this particular context it seems to me that the writer of Kings is not portraying Jehoshaphat as weaker than or submissive to Ahab. It is worth noting that the other two examples are between individuals, whereas Jehoshaphat's oaths are between monarchs of territorial nation states. As we shall argue below, there is no historical or archaeological reason to sup-

Jehoshaphat's response reflects that one of the aspects of the alliance between the house of David and Omri was that Judah would provide military aid, including chariots, for their ally, Israel. We will discuss this in greater detail in our reconstruction of Jehoshaphat's kingdom. At this point, it is worth noting that this exact sequence is repeated again with Ahab's second son, Jehoram, in 2 Kings 3:7.

1 Kings 22:5–28

The next section of the narrative deals with Ahab's prophets giving divine guidance to the enthroned monarchs in Samaria (22:10). As we have already stated above, this section is not relevant for a geopolitical reconstruction, as it contains extensive rhetoric that is fueled by a theological message. Despite this, it is worth noting that Jehoshaphat and Ahab are depicted as equals in 22:10. In fact, the whole sequence of the prophetic involvement was brought on because of Jehoshaphat's request (22:5).¹⁰ One might call this request a stipulation for involvement in the campaign. In any case, there is nothing in this passage that suggests Jehoshaphat's inferiority or vassal status to Ahab. An interesting point of comparison to this pairing can be found in 2 Kings 14:8–14 during the defeat of Amaziah of Judah by Jehoash of Israel at Beth-shemesh. This latter passage is highly significant because it establishes that the writer/editor of Kings is willing to show a Davidic king's inferiority to an Israelite king.¹¹ More significant is that this military inferiority

port the hypothesis that Judah was a vassal to the Omrides. (e.g., Curtis 1910, 396–397). Moreover, it is also important to remember that from a large contextual standpoint Judah had been previously allied with Aram-Damascus against Israel during the previous generation (1 Kings 15:18–20). This reality is an overlooked aspect in their alliance. In light of this, it seems best to interpret Jehoshaphat's statement as an affirmation of military unity with Israel at the expense of Aram-Damascus. Laffey offers a similar assessment as she writes, "Jehoshaphat is here depicted as recognizing the former unity and the potential for unity between Israel and Judah. He therefore seeks to help the northern king regain territory. Though never named in the chapter, that king is Ahab. Perhaps he fades into the background when compared with Jehoshaphat! Whatever happened to Asa's treaty with Aram? Did Aram become greedy and begin to infiltrate southward? Did Jehoshaphat see an alliance with Israel as strategically more important than an alliance with Aram? Israel was, after all, a closer northern neighbor (1985, 58–59)."

10. The closing statement of "hear all you peoples" in 1 Kings 22:28 is typically considered to be a gloss due to its absence in the LXX tradition and occurrence in Micah 1:2, which seems to be a later tradition that identifies Micaiah with Micah (e.g., Montgomery 1951, 340).
11. The positive shift in Israel's fortunes during the early part of the 8th century BCE has been demonstrated through archaeological and historical evidences (Rainey and Notley 2006, 220–223).

was portrayed even when said Judahite king “did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, yet not like David his father. He did in all things as Joash his father had done. But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places” (2 Kings 14:3–4). On this point, we have an exact approximation between Kings’ view of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:43) and Amaziah’s cultic affiliations.

1 Kings 22:29–36

The last section of the narrative details the actual battle sequence and can be outlined as follows: (1) 22:29–30—Ahab’s request for a disguise; (2) 22:31—The Aramean King’s command to his captains to only fight against Ahab; (3) 22:32–33—Jehoshaphat’s near death; (4) 22:34–35—Ahab’s “random” death; (5) 22:36—The conclusion of the battle. It is obvious that none of the dialogue of the various parties between 22:29–31 can be authenticated from external sources. So there is no way of knowing if these words or commands were actually spoken. For example, the literary character of the passage focuses only on the conflict of three characters—Ahab, Jehoshaphat and the King of Syria (Ben-hadad/Hadad-ezer), but the battle obviously would have included much more than just a personal Aramean attack against Ahab. As we have already stated above, there is archaeological evidence that supports Omride/Aramean conflict in Gilead. On account of this, there is good reason to believe that this text represents an actual historical reality from the time of Ahab. However, it should be noted that the exact sequence of events related to Israel and Aramean hegemony over Gilead are difficult to reconstruct. This holds true from both a biblical and an archaeological perspective (Finkelstein, Lipschits, and Sergi 2013, 19). It should also be noted that this passage makes clear that Ahab was unsuccessful in reclaiming Ramoth-gilead, however, 2 Kings 9:14 makes clear that J(eh)oram had been able to reclaim this territory sometime before 841 BCE (the date of Jehu’s coup). This final point may seem unrelated to our present discussion, but this sequence has ramifications upon the dating of Moab’s revolt from Israelite control as recorded in the Mesha Stele.

There is a textual critical issue related to the vestments that Jehoshaphat wore into the battle. The relevant text is 22:30 where the MT reads *וְאַתָּה לְבַשׁ בְּגָדֶיךָ* versus the LXX *καὶ σὺ ἐνδύσαι τὸν ἱματισμὸν μου*.¹² The difference in the person of the pronoun (1MS or 2MS) is of some significance for understanding the relationship between Ahab and Jehoshaphat (Kuntz 1992, 667–668). Walsh has

12. If the LXX reading is maintained, then there would appear to be a possible intertextual link to Saul’s attempt to dress David in his armor in 1 Samuel 17:38–39.

suggested that the LXX 1MS reading and the surrounding context indicates that Jehoshaphat was the vassal of Ahab (Walsh 2006, 65–70).

Ultimately, the force of the text is the same. Jehoshaphat either was coerced by Ahab due to his inferiority to him or naïve as to the trials about to be faced, and, as a result, wore vestments that identified him as the Israelite king to the defending Arameans. If we must choose, the evidence would seem to be in favor of the MT tradition that also has support in the Vulgate. See also the same sequence in 2 Chronicles 18:29 of MT/LXX in agreement with a 2MS versus 1MS reading. However, it should be noted that Jehoshaphat's perspective is completely secondary to the narrative. The main point of the text is to show Ahab's feeble attempt at thwarting the plan of Yahweh as relayed through his prophet, Micaiah (see Montgomery 1951, 335 suggests that the disguise is meant to avoid fate). The literary character of these conversations and their connection to the fulfillment to Micaiah's earlier prophecy make this verse of limited value for determining Jehoshaphat's relative status to Ahab.

To conclude our commentary of the battle of Ramoth-gilead, let us briefly examine the literary motifs and themes within the passage. At the conclusion of Israel/Judah's unsuccessful attack on Aramean Ramoth-gilead 22:36 records the retreating cry of "every man to his city, and every man to his country!" Contextually, this verse harkens back to Micaiah's vision (22:17) and his final word to Ahab (22:28). In the vision, Micaiah sees "all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd (i.e., Ahab's death). And Yahweh said, 'These have no master (i.e., Ahab's death); let each *return to his home in peace* (MwáøIDvV;b).'" This passage belies the Chronicler's statement of Jehoshaphat's return from the battle in 2 Chronicles 19:1 "Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned MwáøIDvV;b (in peace) to his house in Jerusalem." Micaiah's last words to Ahab (22:28) "If you return in peace, Yahweh has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, all peoples!" This final statement should be compared to all Israel who would return to their house MwáøIDvV;b. Essentially, Micaiah is making a prediction that Israel shall return in peace, but Ahab would die in battle.

It is worth noting that the idiom of "every man to his tent/house/city/country/family/inheritance" applies to three distinct situations in the narrative of the Hebrew Bible. (1) Military forces being sent home from battle either because either they were not needed or the military campaign had been completed (Judg. 7:7–8; 21:24; 1 Sam. 13:2; 2 Sam. 19:8; 2 Chron. 11:4); (2) Military forces fleeing from the field of battle before a triumphant foe (1 Sam. 4:10; 2 Sam. 20:22; 1 Kings 22:36); and (3) A decree sent out for Israel to determine their rightful king (1 Sam. 8:22; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16). With this evidence cited and the absence of the phrase in 2 Chronicles 18 noted, one possible conclusion is that the

expression was not used after the exile, although see 2 Chronicles 11:4, as cited above.

To finish our discussion on King's account of the battle of Ramoth-gilead, we may draw three conclusions from 1 Kings 22:1–36. First, the conflict between the Arameans and the allied force of Judah and Israel occurred after three years of peace between Israel and Aram (22:1–2). Second, Ahab and Jehoshaphat were portrayed as political equals (22:4–5,10) despite the fact that the book of Kings also portrayed “righteous” Davidic kings as inferior to Israelite monarchs (2 Kings 14:8–14). Third, the conflict between Aram-Damascus and Israel in Gilead during the 9th century BCE and beyond is established both in biblical and archaeological evidence.¹³

2 Chronicles 18—The Battle of Ramoth-gilead

The Chronicler's expanded, re-worked version of Jehoshaphat's “going down” to Ahab is from Jehoshaphat's perspective and includes three distinct differences from the parallel passage in Kings. (1) The writer of Kings placed the narrative within the context of “three years” of peaceful relations between Aram-Damascus and Israel (1 Kings 22:1–2). But in Chronicles, Jehoshaphat's journey to Israel uses the temporal aspect of “after some years” to refer to the time that had elapsed since Jehoshaphat had attained riches and honor (cf. 2 Chron. 17) and made an alliance with Ahab. (2) The Chronicler excluded Ahab's impetus for mustering forces against Aram-Damascus ... “Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?” (1 Kings 22:3b). (3) In Chronicles, Ahab “induced Jehoshaphat to go up against Ramoth-gilead” (2 Chron. 18:2) with the help of a large feast of sheep and oxen for Jehoshaphat. Although this information is not present in Kings, it may be the Chronicler re-working the narrative by means of 2 Kings 3:4–5, which details Ahab's livestock tribute from Moab.

Another expansion of the account in Kings is 2 Chronicles 18:31b where the Chronicler adds a divine answer to Jehoshaphat's cries “... and Yahweh helped him; God drew them away from him.” In Kings 22:32, the source of Jehoshaphat's salvation is implied as divine, whereas the Chronicler, in typical fashion (2 Chron. 32:22), explicitly showed Yahweh's aid to the Davidic monarch.

13. For a good reconstruction of the sequence of events in their larger context see Bolen's “Chronology of Events Related to the Aramean Oppression” (2013, 248).

Finally, the only other noteworthy difference in the account is the final verse (2 Chron. 22:35) where the Chronicler has clipped the recounting of Ahab's death by excluding "a cry went out through the army, 'every man to his city, and every man to his country!'" (1 Kings 22:36). This divergence is not surprising, since the Chronicler was writing from Jehoshaphat's perspective, and these details were superfluous to his recounting, unlike the writer of Kings, who used this sentence as a transition to Ahab's funerary summary (1 Kings 22:37–40). Despite the lack of necessity in Chronicles, its loss breaks Kings' nice symmetry between Jehoshaphat's cry before Ahab's seemingly imminent demise and Ahab's army crying out after his timely end.

To conclude this discussion, what can we say about the reliability of Chronicler's rendition of the battle of Ramoth-gilead? Despite the few expansions and exclusions mentioned above, Chronicles, for the most part, is identical to Kings. Where there is variation, the effect is minor and seems to have been implemented to make Jehoshaphat the main character of the account. Ahab's extravagant feast and the preceding length of the "marriage alliance" before their meeting in Samaria are unattested in Kings, however, even if neither of these details is included in Kings or available to the Chronicler from another source, they are at least plausible inferences from Kings (cf. 1 Kings 22:44; 2 Kings 3:4–5; 8:18). The one exception to these plausible inferences is the wealth and fame attributed to Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 18:1, this inference and the significance of the Chronicler's portrayal of Jehoshaphat's wealth and fame are directly related to his view of him as expressed in 2 Chronicles 17.

One final point regarding this passage, according to both 1 Kings 22:44 and 2 Chronicles 18:1b, Jehoshaphat was the active participant in making a peace/alliance with Ahab. While this does not prove that Jehoshaphat was ultimately responsible for the treaty, it does mean that the Chronicler was using 1 Kings 22:44 in his re-telling of 1 Kings 22:1–36 vis-à-vis 2 Chronicles 18:1–34. This means that both of the available sources for the alliance between the two kingdoms viewed Jehoshaphat as at least being on the same geopolitical footing as Ahab. Certainly it is possible to conclude that both sources are historically unreliable, but on this point it is not because the Chronicler is inflating the tradition of Kings. The conclusion that Jehoshaphat was a vassal to Ahab assumes a priori that both Kings and Chronicles are not historically reliable on this point.

Historical Implications from the Tel Dan Stele

The Tel Dan Stele and the Mesha Stele allow for a better reconstruction of the larger political motivations of the various polities in the 9th century BCE. However, they are not without their own difficulties for reconstructing the reign of

Jehoshaphat. Most notably, neither of these texts makes a direct reference to the person of Jehoshaphat. Although both do refer to the dynastic “House of David” (line 9 in the Tel Dan Stele (COS 2.162) and line 31 of the Mesha Stele),¹⁴ this term appears to be the neighboring nations’ referent for the kingdom of Judah. Moreover, these texts were written from their own perspective, which conceivably portrays their own actions in a positive light. The great value of these texts is that they can be dated to the mid-late 9th century BCE. The key distinction here is that these dates relate both to their occurrence and their composition. This means that they were based upon the actual thoughts of Mesha of Moab and Hazael(?) of Aram-Damascus concerning events that occurred during their respective reigns. These two texts are “eye-witness accounts” of the mid-9th century BCE, even if they are nationally charged in their conception. Moreover, the fact that these texts are biased towards their own values and actions means that they offer a unique perspective that can be compared against the equally charged and biased direct sources of Kings and Chronicles. Concerning history, the Tel Dan Stele is helpful in illuminating the sequencing of the biblical accounts of Israelite/Judahite relations with Moab in 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4–27; and 2 Chronicles 20:1–30 in connection with the Mesha Stele.

Due to the abundant and ever-increasing literature devoted to both the reading and interpretation of the Tel Dan Stele (Biran and Naveh 1993; Ahituv 1993; Biran and Naveh 1995; Schniedewind 1996; Lemaire 1998; Galil 2001; Athas 2006; Hagelia 2006; Suriano 2007; Aufrecht 2007; Hagelia 2009; Bolen 2013, 49–58) not much needs to be added with regards to its reading or historical setting. In general, the original reading and interpretation put forth by Biran and Naveh (1995, 1–18) seem historically acceptable. The Tel Dan Stele was an Aramaic victory stele that was likely setup at the conquered city of Dan by the victorious Aramean King Hazael after the tumultuous events of 841 BCE. These events include the death of Hazael’s predecessor (Ben-hadad/Hadad-ezer) and two of his enemies, Jehoram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah (cf. 2 Kings 9–10).¹⁵

The setting and events of the Tel Dan Stele are beyond our scope (Hafþórsson 2006; Finkelstein 2013a; Berlejung 2014, 339–365), however, the events mentioned in the text provide a definitive conclusion to the era of Omride Israel and contemporary allied Judah. The Tel Dan Stele together with the Black Obelisk (COS 2.269), the Annals: Marble Slab (COS 2.267–268), the Annals: Calah Bulls (COS 2.266–267) and 2 Kings 9–10 provides a fixed date of 841 BCE for the

14. See Lemaire’s reconstruction (1994).

15. See Bolen’s treatment for a good reconstruction and synthesis with the account in 2 Kings 9–10 (2013, 51–54).

events mentioned above and the Jehu and Athaliah coups. From the perspective of this current work, the Tel Dan Stele also offers historical clues into the nature of relations between Israel, Aram, Judah, Edom and Moab before 841 BCE. The northern part of the country was dominated by a power struggle between Aram-Damascus and Israel throughout the reigns of Baasha (1 Kings 15:18–19), Omri, Ahab (1 Kings 20), Ahaziah, and Jehoram (2 Kings 9). 841 BCE marks the end of that struggle with the Arameans with the usurping Hazael (2 Kings 8:7–15; COS 2.270) gaining the upper hand over Israel. Over the next half-century, Aram-Damascus under Hazael and his son, Ben-hadad (i.e., Bir-Hadad) dominated the political landscape of the southern Levant (2 Kings 13:3; 22¹⁶) until the arrival of Adad-Nirari II (2 Kings 13:4; Rimah Stele COS 2.276). This domination included the destruction of Gath (2 Kings 12:17) the largest city in the southern Levant at the time (Maeir 2012, 1–88), the removal of Gilead and Bashan from Israel (2 Kings 10:32), the subjugation of Judah under Joash (2 Kings 12:18), and the destruction of many other sites in the Galilee, Jezreel Valley, Coastal Plain and Shephelah (Finkelstein 2013b, 119–129; Bolen 2013, 243–251; Ortiz and Wolff 2012, 4–19; Tappy et al. 2006).

These major geopolitical shifts following 841 BCE are consequential for the dating of several historical and archaeological issues. Regarding archaeology, Finkelstein (2013b, 127) and Sergi (2013, 226–246) have each proposed that the Judahite expansion to the Negev occurred only in the late 9th century BCE (i.e., the late Iron IIA) as a result of their vassalhood to Aram-Damascus in the time of Hazael. Finkelstein makes his case this way,

The renewed import of Cypriot copper to the Levant was probably the reason for the decline of Khirbet en-Nahas. Since trade relations with the Levant in the second half of the 9th century were dominated by Damascus and its ally/vassal towns on the Phoenician coast, the suppression of copper production at Khirbet en-Nahas could have served the interests of Hazael. One can therefore speculate that the Damascene campaign against Gath and the south aimed, among other reasons, at stopping the desert copper production in order to monopolize copper trade in the Levant. The construction of the two Judahite fortresses in the Beer-sheba Valley—the main route between Khirbet en-Nahas and the coast—could have served these goals. According

16. The Lucianic recension of the LXX has the following addition “Hazael took from [Jehoahaz] hands all Philistia from the Western Sea to Aphek” (Richelle 2010, 19–25; Hasegawa 2014, 61–76). This is the only attestation for this tradition, which makes it difficult to determine its authenticity, however it is hard to imagine a situation from which such an account could arise. The Iron IIA destruction level at Aphek may relate to Hazael’s movements in the southern Levant (Kleiman 2013).

to this scenario, Judah expanded for the first time to the Beer-sheba Valley as a vassal of Damascus in the days of King Jehoash, in the late 9th century. Judahite control in this region continued until the fall of the southern kingdom over two centuries later. (Finkelstein 2013b, 127)

This reconstruction is problematic for a number of reasons that we will discuss below.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the significance of the Battle of Ramoth-gilead with regards to the relationship of Israel and Judah in the mid-9th century BCE. This was accomplished by a detailed textual analysis of 1 Kings 22:1–36 and 2 Chronicles 18. I argued that when read in the context of the larger events of the 9th century BCE (e.g., Tel Dan Stele) the alliance of Ahab and Jehoshaphat points to the basic equality of the two monarchs and their respective nations. As we shall see in the next chapter, the alliance between Jehoshaphat and the Omrides continued into the reign of Ahab's son, Ahaziah.

Jehoshaphat's Reign According to 1 Kings 22:41–50

Our next section of discussion covers the most significant passage for determining the scope of the reign of Jehoshaphat. Unlike Ahab, Jehoshaphat's longer, contemporary reign was only given a few paragraphs of discussion in 1 Kings 22:41–49. This imbalance is turned on its head in Chronicles, where the events of Jehoshaphat's reign receive four complete chapters (2 Chron. 17–20) with the only event of Ahab's reign (the battle of Ramoth-gilead) being recorded from Jehoshaphat's perspective. Despite the lack of overall treatment, this section offers the researcher a concise, chronistic account of the reign of Jehoshaphat that is largely free of any theological or cultic affiliations.¹ Twelve separate details related to the reign of Jehoshaphat emerge from these verses (see Table 4–1). We shall analyze each of these details to determine their historical plausibility.

1. Save for the global usage of cultic characterization via Davidic king X “walking (or not walking) in the way of X his father ...” present in 1 Kings 22:43a (e.g., 1 Kings 16:26; 2 Kings 22:2). And a note on Jehoshaphat's removal of the remnant of the “male cult prostitutes” in 1 Kings 22:46.

Table 4-1 Jehoshaphat's Reign According to 1 Kings 22:41–50.

Details	Reference	Reliable
1. Asa son of Abijah (father)	22:41	Yes ²
2. Azubah daughter of Shilhi (mother)	22:42	Yes
3. Began reign in fourth year of Ahab	22:41	Highly Probable
4. Thirty-five years old when he began to reign	22:42	Highly Probable
5. Cult assessment—he did what was right like his father, yet high places remained	22:43	?
6. Made peace with the king of Israel (Ahab)	22:44	Yes
7. Other details of strength and warfare are to be found in “the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah”	22:45	N/A
8. Exterminated the remnant of the “male cult prostitutes”	22:46	?
9. Maintained sovereignty over Edom with a king loyal to Judah	22:47	Highly Probable
10. Failed Red Sea/Tarshish venture from Etzion-geber	22:48	Highly Probable
11. Rejection of Omride help via Ahaziah son of Ahab	22:49	Probable
12. Death and burial in the city of David	22:50	Yes

1 Kings 22:41–42—Jehoshaphat's Lineage

We begin our discussion with a treatment of Jehoshaphat's parents, Asa and Azubah. Not much needs to be said with regards to the existence of his father, King Asa, whose forty-one-year reign was one of the longest in Judahite history (1 Kings 15:9–24). A discussion of the geo-political impact of Asa's reign goes beyond the realm of our discussion, but we shall discuss some aspects when it has clear ramifications on the reign of his son, Jehoshaphat.³ Regarding Jehoshaphat's mother, Azubah, nothing can be said about her or her father, Shilhi, as neither person is

2. For the determining factors behind this assessment see the arguments below.

3. The reign of Asa and its relationship to the Iron IIA archaeological sequence is of great significance for reconstructing the history of the late 10th and early 9th centuries BCE with regards to the emergence of Judah as a territorial state. Several recent treatments have dealt with this subject (Na'aman 2013; Sergi 2013; Rainey and Notley 2006, 190–199).

mentioned outside of 22:42. However, it should be noted that each of the divided Judahite monarchs' characterizations includes a record of the king's mother (except for Jehoram and Ahaz). Many have argued for the reliability of this information since it would seem that it must have been copied from an earlier source or a series of sources (e.g., BinNun 1968; Na'aman 2008c; 2013, 255; Halpern and Lemaire 2010), as opposed to being simply invented by a later exilic redactor.

1 Kings 22:41—The Regnal Chronology of the Reign of Jehoshaphat

Of immediate consequence to the reliability of the Jehoshaphat material in Kings is the synchronism of the beginning of Jehoshaphat's twenty-five-year reign (from the age of thirty-five) to the fourth year of Ahab of Israel (22:41–42). To properly analyze the regnal chronology of Jehoshaphat I have briefly examined various reconstructed chronologies of the kings of ancient Israel and Judah (see below) and thoroughly examined Thiele's generally accepted chronology (Thiele 1994). On this second point I have evaluated Thiele's chronology through an in-depth analysis with regards to the time period of 931–841 BCE and the reigns of Ahab and Jehoshaphat. The results of this analysis are reflected in my discussion below and Figure 4-1.

The reader should note that this discussion is a slight departure from our commentary of 2 Kings 22:41–50. Since the chronology relates directly to our commentary of 22:41–42 its inclusion is necessary for determining the reliability of Kings as a historical source. Moreover, establishing the exact dates of Jehoshaphat's reign is crucial for our comparison of the archaeological remains of Judah in the Iron II (Chapter Five).⁴

Summary of Other Chronologies of Jehoshaphat and Ahab

Regarding the dating of Jehoshaphat's reign various dates have been offered for his reign (e.g., Galil 1996, 32–45; Soggin 1999, 240; Tetley 2005, 82). It should be noted that the relative regnal dates of Jehoshaphat and his contemporary Ahab are given in accordance with larger chronological systems. Below, I have listed the results of these chronologies with relation to Jehoshaphat and Ahab. Where relevant I have footnoted the rationale for achieving these dates.

4. See Vaughn's treatment of Hezekiah (2000a, 7–17), which also prioritized the regnal chronology for historical and archaeological reconstruction.

Jehoshaphat (872–848 BCE)

873–848 BCE (McFall 1989a; Young 2003, 589–603)⁵

868–847 BCE (Soggin 1999, 240, 386)⁶

873–849 BCE (Albright 1945, 20; Bright 2000, 241)⁷

874–850 BCE (Miller and Hayes 2006, 220)⁸

870–845 BCE (Galil 1996, 32–45, 147)⁹

870–846 BCE (Cogan 1992a, 1010; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 341)¹⁰

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5. This chronology is basically the same as Thiele's (1994), the only difference is the moving of Solomon's death to 932 BCE, which in effect moves many of the dates six months earlier.
 6. Soggin also offers the dates of 873–849 BCE as an alternative. Soggin's chronology places the division of the kingdom in 922 BCE and does not recognize co-regencies in the reigns of Omri, Asa, or Jehoshaphat.
 7. Held to a 922 BCE division of the kingdom versus the more accepted 931 BCE date.
 8. Follows the Lucianic tradition, placing Ahab after Jehoshaphat (873–851 BCE) and making Jehoram (Judah) the counterpart of Jehoram (Israel) in 2 Kings 3.
 9. Of the dissenting views of Thiele's chronology, Galil's makes the most sense since it allows for co-regency and dates the Shishak invasion to the mostly accepted 926/925 BCE date (1996, 32–45, 147; 2010, 427–443, who believes that the Deuteronomic history is made up of 880 years of which the last 400 years comprises the Kingdom of Judah and its monarchs). It has also received acceptance in several reference works (e.g., Mykytiuk 2004; Liverani 2005). Even if Galil's chronology is to be accepted, the effect on the overall chronology of Jehoshaphat's reign is minimal, as it only pushes Thiele's dates of 872–848 to 870–845 BCE while accepting his conclusions that there were co-reigns with Asa and Jehoram. It is worth noting that the crucial absolute dating elements of 926/925 BCE (Shishak invasion), 853 BCE (Battle of Qarqar—Kurkh Stele), 841 BCE (Shalmaneser III tribute by Jehu—Black Obelisk) in Thiele and Galil's chronologies (Thiele 1994, 67–78; Galil's 1996, 12–45). Despite statements to the contrary (Galil 1996, 4–5), Galil and Thiele's methodology for achieving the regnal dates is quite similar. Vaughn points out that Galil's "new chronology" is not "novel" and states that Galil made "a methodological error" in dismissing some of Thiele's Neo-Assyrian synchronisms, which Vaughn suggests are still viable options for historical reconstruction (2000b, 75–76).
 10. Tadmor's dates (also reflected in Cogan's work) are only coincidentally identical with Galil's dates, but they do not accept a 925 BCE date for Shishak's invasion (Tadmor 1962, 245–310; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 341; Cogan 1992a, 1010). Galil points out several of Tadmor's textual emendations (e.g., Joram from 12 to 10 years, Jehoram from 8 to 9 years, and Ahaziah from 1 to 2 years) point to the problematic nature of the overall chronology (Tadmor 1962, 291 ff.; Galil 1996, 39–40; 2010, 439; cf. Begrich 1929, 105 ff. who also emended the date of Ahaziah).

877–853 BCE (Hayes and Hooker 2007, 24–30)¹¹

921–896 BCE (Tetley 2005, 82)¹²

Ahab (874–853 BCE)

869–850 BCE (Soggin 1999, 241, 386)¹³

869–850 BCE (Albright 1945, 20; Bright 2000, 241)

873–851 BCE (Miller and Hayes 2006, 220)

873–852 BCE (Galil 1996, 32–45, 147)

873–852 BCE (Cogan 1992a, 1010; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 341)

868–854 BCE (Hayes and Hooker 2007, 24–30)

919–897 BCE (Tetley 2005, 182)

Thiele's Dating Principles

As far back as the codifying of the Septuagint (2nd century BCE), the regnal reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel have perplexed readers of the books of Kings and Chronicles. Perhaps the most bewildering aspect of the chronological problem is the administrative nature of the sequential recounting of the reigns of the Israelite kings. Put another way, in reading about the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel, one gets the distinct impression that the chronological texts are derived from official documents and should be more or less historically accurate. However, until relatively recently, all attempts at resolving the chronological difficulties have failed to produce a working timeline. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, the landmark study by E. Thiele, attempted to crack the riddle of Israelite regnal chronology. Three main dating principles form the basis of Thiele's chronology,

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11. Assumes no co-regency between Asa and Jehoshaphat and reduces the reign of Ahab from 22 years to 15 years (868–853 BCE). The following statement probably best characterizes the “carefulness” of Hayes and Hooker's method: “Because of the difficulties in synchronizing a reign for twenty-two years, we have assumed that Ahab reigned for fifteen years” (Hayes and Hooker 2007, 28). Rainey criticized Hayes and Hooker's method (2006, 174).
 12. A radical new system that disregards absolute chronology almost completely and champions the LXX and Lucianic recensions.
 13. Provides 871–852 BCE as another suggestion.

which are as follows: (1) The Masoretic Text¹⁴ is the original text that lies behind the Septuagint;¹⁵ (2) Israel and Judah used different regnal systems in chronicling their kings; and (3) There are numerous examples of co-regencies in both Judah and Israel's chronologies.

Thiele's chronology has been met with a level acceptance among many scholars.¹⁶ Thiele's mentor W. Irwin provides this statement of commendation for his former student: "The validity of his (Thiele's) own findings rests on the simple fact that they work! They take account of all the data provided by the biblical record and organize them in a system that is rational, consistent, and precise" (Thiele 1994, 28).

MT > LXX

The confusion regarding the numerical values of the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah can be traced historically to the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the LXX, which offers a very different reading than the MT in many of its chronological attestations. It is quite clear, based on the numerous divergent examples¹⁷ between the MT and the LXX that the translators of the LXX attempted to "harmonize" the chronological issues in the MT by updating them in their Greek translation.¹⁸ Thiele's close examination of all the relevant ancient texts (MT, LXX, Lucianic recensions, etc.) showed that the MT is not only the original text behind the later Greek translations, but that the Hebrew texts of Kings and Chronicles have been passed down through antiquity with outstanding accuracy.

14. Hereafter MT.

15. Hereafter LXX.

16. For instance, Thiele's chronology has been adopted by such works as (Finegan 1998; Merrill 2008; Rainey and Notley 2006). Cogan also recognizes Thiele's work as a "cornerstone" of chronological discussion (1992b, 1006).

17. See Shenkel (1968, 63–85) for an in-depth discussion of the topic of the LXX's chronological system. His conclusions of LXX primacy over the MT have not received widespread support (e.g. Gooding 1970; Cogan 1992b, 1009–1010; Thiele 1994, 92; Rainey and Notley 2006, 172–174). Although see also Tetley's recent attempt (2005), which argues for LXX primacy in many locations and seeks a reconstruction that places the division of the kingdom during 981 BCE, a half-century earlier than most scholars accept (e.g., Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Rainey and Notley 2006, 171). Neither Shenkel, Tetley, nor other similar theorists have been met with wide acceptance.

18. Likewise, Josephus also changed the dates given in Kings and Chronicles, but yielded different numbers than the LXX (Thiele 1994, 28).

Thiele's final analysis concluded that only two synchronisms have been corrupted in the Hebrew texts: the accessions of Jotham and Ahaz (2 Kings 15:32; 16:1) (1994, 17). More than that—even these two “errors” seem to have been plausibly eradicated by later adaptations of Thiele's chronology (Horn 1969, 40–52; McFall 1989b, 393–404; 1989a, 3–45; 1991, 6–11; 1992, 35–58; 2008; 2010, 475–533; Young 2003, 589–603; 2005, 225–248; Young 2007, 1–25).¹⁹ Even if these two instances are to be seen as errors of transmission they are the exceptions that prove the rule of textual reliability with regards to the Hebrew chronology.

The characteristic dissimilarity between the LXX and MT's renderings of regnal chronology applies directly to the topic at hand, namely an analysis of the alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat. The reigns of Asa (Jehoshaphat's father) and Omri (Ahab's father) are the beginning of both the confusion related to the chronology of the Divided Monarchy, as well as the dissimilarity between the MT and LXX in the regnal systems. The MT and LXX offer varying synchronisms of Jehoshaphat, relating his reign to those of Asa, Omri, Ahab, Jehoram (son of Judah), Ahaziah (Israel), and Jehoram (Israel). The following table highlights the dissimilarities of the MT and LXX as they relate to Jehoshaphat.

19. With regards to Young's work regarding the dating of the beginning of the Divided Kingdom, namely that of moving Thiele's proposed death of Solomon from the last half of 931 BCE to sometime in 932 BCE, I acknowledge the plausibility of his conclusions (2005, 225–228). However, the work below follows the conclusions of Thiele, who himself acknowledged the problem of giving whole years to the beginning or ending of many of the kings (1994, 87). Jehoshaphat's co-reign may have begun in the last half of 873 BCE or the first half of 872 BCE. For the sake of consistency, this study will portray the latter, as it was understood by Thiele.

Table 4–2 A MT/LXX Comparison of Regnal Patterns of the Book of Kings.

MT	LXX
1. “And Omri slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son reigned in his place” (1 Kings 16:28).²⁰ (Portion included in 1 Kings 16:28 LXX was taken from 1 Kings 22:41–50 MT.)	1. “And Ambri slept with his fathers, and is buried in Samaria; and Achaab his son reigns in his stead. And in the eleventh year of Ambri Josaphat the son of Asa reigns,²¹ <i>being</i> thirty-five years old in the beginning of his reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem: and his mother’s name <i>was</i> Gazuba, daughter of Seli. And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and turned not from it, <i>even</i> from doing right in the eyes of the Lord: only they removed not <i>any</i> of the high places; they sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places. Now the engagements, which Josaphat made with the king of Israel, and all his mighty deeds which he performed, and the enemies whom he fought against, behold, <i>are</i> not these written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Juda? And the remains of the prostitution which they practiced in the days of Asa his father, he removed out of the land: and there was no king in Syria, <i>but</i> a deputy. And king Josaphat made a ship at Tharsis to go to Sophir for gold: but it went not, for the ship was broken at Gasion Gaber. Then the king of Israel said to Josaphat, I will send forth thy servants and my servants in the ship: but Josaphat would not. And Josaphat slept with his fathers, and is buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Joram his son reigned in his stead.”²² (1 Kings 16:28 LXX).²³

20. All references are ESV (English Standard Version), unless otherwise noted.

21. Thiele referred to the LXX’s faulty and disjointed chronological system as the “inconsequent accession-year reckoning” (1994, 93).

22. Red lettering signifies dissimilarity between the MT and the LXX.

23. Translation: Brenton LXX.

MT	LXX
2. "In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years" (1 Kings 16:29).	2. "In the second year of Josaphat king of Juda, Achaab son of Ambri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years" (1 Kings 16:29 LXX).
3. "Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel" (1 Kings 22:41).	3. "And Josaphat the son of Asa reigned over Juda: in the fourth year of Achaab king of Israel began Josaphat to reign" (1 Kings 22:41 LXX).
4. "Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel" (1 Kings 22:51).	4. "And Ochozias son of Achaab reigned over Israel in Samaria: in the seventeenth year of Josaphat king of Juda, ²⁴ Ochozias son of Achaab reigned over Israel in Samaria two years" (1 Kings 22:52 LXX).
5. "So he died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, ²⁵ because Ahaziah had no son. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?" (2 Kings 1:17–18).	5. "So he died according to the word of the Lord which Eliu has spoken. And the rest of the acts of Ochozias which he did, behold, <i>are</i> they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joram son of Achaab reigns over Israel in Samaria twelve years <i>beginning</i> in the eighteenth year of Josaphat king of Juda ²⁶ : and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, only not as his brethren, nor as his mother: and he removed the pillars of Baal which his father made, and broke them in pieces: only he was joined to the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who led Israel to sin; he departed not from them. And the Lord was very angry with the house of Achaab" ²⁷ (2 Kings 1:17–18 LXX).

24. The Lucianic text, a text known for its conflated rendering of variant passages (Brotzman 1993, 77) reads the "twenty-fourth year of Jehoshaphat."

25. That is the second year of Jehoram's co-regency with Jehoshaphat that began in 853 BCE before the battle of Ramoth-gilead.

26. Lucianic text in agreement with the MT reads "second year of Jehoram (Judah)."

27. Repetition of 2 Kings 3:1–3 LXX/MT.

MT	LXX
6. "In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twelve years" (2 Kings 3:1).	6. "And Joram the son of Achaab began to reign in Israel in the eighteenth year of Josaphat king of Juda, and he reigned twelve years" (2 Kings 3:1 LXX).
7. "In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, ²⁸ Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, ²⁹ began to reign. He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem" (2 Kings 8:16–17).	7. "In the fifth year of Joram son of Achaab king of Israel, Joram the son of Josaphat king of Juda began to reign. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem" (2 Kings 8:16–17 LXX).

The table above clearly shows the inconsistency of the LXX's rendering of Jehoshaphat's synchronisms. In the first synchronism, the LXX reproduces material from 1 Kings 22:41–50 and places it in 1 Kings 16:28.³⁰ The result is a repetition of the summary of Jehoshaphat's reign and a clear redaction on the part of the LXX's translator (Thiele 1994, 90–91). The Greek text places the reign of Jehoshaphat before the reign of Ahab with the additional material of 1 Kings 16:28. However, a contradiction is introduced within the LXX with the addition of "in the eleventh year of Omri Jehoshaphat began to reign" of 1 Kings 16:28

28. Most English translations (ESV, NAS, KJV, etc.) keep $\text{hó}\tilde{\text{c}}\text{d} \dots \text{wh}\tilde{\text{o}}\text{y} \text{JKRl}\infty\text{Rm f}^{\text{TM}}\text{Dp-Dvw}\tilde{\text{o}}\text{h}\text{y}'\text{w}$ from the MT, while only a small minority (RSV and NET) prefer the LXX's reading, which excludes the detail. In this author's estimation, there are three possible conclusions: 1) The MT is the original text and does not include a scribal error. 2) The MT is the original and does include a scribal error. 3) The LXX is the original. Of these three, the first two seem much more likely since the LXX's synchronisms have already been shown to be suspect. While it is true that the phrase in question is not in keeping with Kings' typical formulaic way of presenting regnal data (death of king, summary of dead king, burial of dead king, accession of new king), the passage can be seen as a cryptic attestation to the co-reign of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (853–848 BCE). Therefore, both of the MT possibilities remain viable candidates for being the superior text.

29. Shift from accession year reckoning to non-accession reckoning in Judah begins here with the reign of Jehoram of Judah.

30. The LXX's 1 Kings 16:28 is equal to that of 1 Kings 22:41–46; 50 (LXX), while leaving out 1 Kings 22:47–49 (MT).

without the removal of “Jehoshaphat son of Asa reigned over Judah, in the fourth year of Ahab” of 1 Kings 22:41. Moreover, with Jehoshaphat’s summary preceding Ahab’s accession (1 Kings 16:28 LXX), the additional Jehoshaphat summary in 1 Kings 22:41–50 (verses 47–49 are omitted) of the LXX becomes superfluous and clearly out of place.

The MT in Jehoshaphat’s synchronisms clearly lies behind the LXX’s confusion regarding these passages. The confused text of the LXX is a product of an early misunderstanding of the dating systems of the kings of Judah and Israel. An accurate understanding of these somewhat complicated systems allows for great clarity on the matter of Israelite regnal chronology. These systems will be discussed in detail shortly. Contrasting the Hebrew text to the Greek synchronisms, Thiele writes:

One indication of the artificiality of the Greek pattern is found in the dubious methods that they used for chronological procedure. In the Hebrew text, there is a consistent use of the legitimate accession- and nonaccession-year methods of reckoning. When the use of these systems is understood, many of the most frequent difficulties disappear, and a pattern of reigns comes forth in accord with the regnal data and with the years of Israel’s neighbors. In the Greek pattern, however, there is no consistency in methods of chronological procedure. There is only a haphazard jumping back and forth from one system to another, and often the resort is an utterly fallacious system. At first glance the Greek pattern appears to be strangely akin to legitimate accession-year reckoning, but it is actually an erroneous and deceptive contrivance resorted to only because of involvements in which no legitimate method of chronological reckoning will work. (1994, 93)

If the LXX’s synchronisms are later re-workings of the Hebrew, then what is to be said about the original Hebrew regnal material? At first glance, the Hebrew Asa and Jehoshaphat synchronisms seem to be contradictory. How could Omri become king in the thirty-first year of Asa, reign for twelve years, and then die in the thirty-eighth year of Asa? How could Jehoram, son of Ahab, become king of Israel during the second year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, but still have interactions with Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 3)? The answers to both of these questions lie in the dating practice of dual dating.

Non-accession vs. Accession Reckoning

Accession-year reckoning (or postdating) is a system of dating in which the first year of a king’s reign is an “accession year” and the first year of his official reign begins on the first day of the first month of the following year. Another method of dating is the “non-accession-year” system (or antedating). This system begins

counting a king's reign from the day that he began his reign.³¹ If one were to calculate the reigns of a series of kings by using both systems, upon comparison, the sum of the non-accession-year system would be one more than the accession year system for every king counted (Thiele 1994, 44).³² Judah used the accession-year system until the reign of Jehoram (Judah),³³ whereas, Israel used the non-accession year system throughout its history (resulting in one more official year per king than Judah). Despite this, whenever either kingdom would refer to its neighbor's regnal data, it would do so according to its own regnal system (Thiele 1994, 49). This principle holds true for the regnal data pertaining to Jehoshaphat. As seen in the table below, Jehoshaphat's five synchronisms³⁴ are split between accession-year reckonings (Judah) and non-accession-year reckonings (Israel).

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31. Judah used a Tishri-Tishri regnal year (September/October–September/October), as evidenced by the length of time numbered in the building of the temple in 1 Kings 6:38 during the time of Solomon (beginning) and the abundance of recorded events about Josiah's eighteenth regnal year from the repair work (presumably sometime in the fall, as opposed to 1 Nisan) to the following Passover celebration (14 Nisan). Moreover, the Tishri regnal year precisely reconciles the chronology, something a Nisan–Nisan (March/April–March/April) regnal year for Judah confuses entirely (Thiele 1994, 52–54). On the other hand, Israel used a Nisan–Nisan regnal year, as explained by Jeroboam I's observance of the Egyptian royal year beginning in the spring during his exile (1 Kings 11:40, 12:2–3:20) and his repugnance of the Judahite calendar (1 Kings 12:33). As with Judah, a consistent establishment of the Israelite regnal year produces accuracy among the biblical chronological synchronisms.
 32. See Thiele (1994, 78) for a discussion regarding the time period from the schism of Israel to the battle of Qarqar (931/930–853 BCE).
 33. 848 BCE, when it switched to non-accession-year reckoning. This switch may have occurred later during the reign of Jehoram's wife Athaliah and applied retroactively to Jehoram's reign, but there is no way to be certain (Thiele 1994, 96). Later it would return once again to the accession-year reckoning during the reign of Amaziah (Thiele 1994, 57–59).
 34. There are seven synchronisms if the LXX's extra material in 1 Kings 16:28 and its synchronism of Ahab to Jehoshaphat's second year in 1 Kings 16:29 (contra MT's reading to Asa) is included. However, the MT consistently shows that the kingdom of Ahab preceded the kingdom of Jehoshaphat.

Table 4–3 Accession vs. Non-accession in the Reign of Jehoshaphat.

Synchronistic Text	Kingdom Perspective	King Ascending	King Referent	Judahite Year of Referent	Israelite Year of Referent
1 Kings 22:41	Judah	Jehoshaphat	Ahab	4th a ³⁵	5 th na
1 Kings 22:51	Israel	Ahaziah (I)	Jehoshaphat	16 th a	17th na
2 Kings 1:17–18	Israel	Jehoram (I)	Jehoram (J)	1 st a	2nd na
2 Kings 3:1	Israel	Jehoram (I)	Jehoshaphat	18th a	18 th ³⁶ na
2 Kings 8:16–17	Judah	Jehoram (J)	Jehoram (I)	5th na ³⁷	5 th na

Dual Dating/Co-regency

Co-regency, put simply, is a period of time in which a kingdom has two or more reigning kings. This period, which is also known as “dual-dating,” may either be voluntary on behalf of the antecedent king for reasons of kingdom continuity (war, illness, etc.) or may be involuntary, brought on by a rival (*coup d’état*, death of a king without an heir, etc.). A failure to understand this principle of dating has caused problems among attempts at chronological harmonies of ancient Near Eastern historians. Thiele determined that there were nine overlapping reigns—three in Israel³⁸ and six in Judah³⁹ (Thiele 1994, 61–65).

Only the first of the three co-regencies of Israel has any relation to the reign of Jehoshaphat: the co-reign of Omri and Tibni. Omri and Tibni became rival co-monarchs over Israel for five years after the usurper, Zimri, murdered Elah (the

35. Bold numbers are textually-attested regnal years—a = accession-year reckoning; na = non-accession-year reckoning.

36. In this case, Jehoshaphat’s eighteenth regnal year is equal in both the non-accession-year and accession-year reckonings, because the synchronism is counted from the beginning of Jehoshaphat’s sole reign. This would have been Jehoshaphat’s twenty-first official year, including his co-reign.

37. As has already been noted, Jehoram’s (Judah) synchronisms represent Judah’s fundamental shift from the accession-year reckoning to the non-accession-year reckoning; thus the year of Jehoram of Israel is the same in both Judah and Israel’s reckonings.

38. 1). Omri and Tibni (1 Kings 16:21–22), 2). Jehoash and Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:8–13; 2 Chron. 25:18–23), and 3). Menahem and Pekah (Hos. 5:5).

39. 1). Asa and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 15:23; 2 Chron. 16:12), 2). Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (1 Kings 22:4, 32–33; noted in 2 Kings 8:16), 3). Amaziah and Azariah (Uzziah) (2 Kings 14:8–13, 21; 2 Chron. 25:21–24), 4). Azariah and Jotham (2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chron. 26:21), 5). Jotham and Ahaz (2 Kings 16:7), and 6). Hezekiah and Manasseh (2 Kings 20:1–6, 2 Chron. 32:24).

last of Baasha's dynasty). Zimri then committed suicide instead of facing retribution from Elah's commandant, Omri (1 Kings 16:8–21). After a period of five years, Omri was able to gain complete control of the empire and "Tibni died" (1 Kings 16:22). First Kings 16:23 makes clear the distinction between Omri's co-reign and his sole reign: "In the thirty-first year [thirtieth for accession reckoning] of Asa king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel, **and he reigned for twelve years** [eleven years for accession reckoning/actual years]; **six years he reigned in Tirzah** [five years for accession reckoning/actual years]." Understanding Omri and Tibni's co-reign helps clarify all of the chronological problems regarding the reign of Jehoshaphat, including that of the LXX's confusion. Of the six Judahite co-regencies, two apply directly to the reign of Jehoshaphat and will be discussed below. Thiele's chronology for Jehoshaphat can be summarized in three specific periods for Jehoshaphat's reign (872–848 BCE)—(1) co-reign with Asa (872–869 BCE), (2) sole regency (869–853 BCE), (3) co-reign with Jehoram (853–848 BCE).

Table 4–4 Omri's Reign.

Years	Actual Years ⁴⁰	Co-reign Tibni (na) ⁴¹	Sole Reign	Asa's Regnal Years (na)
885/884	0 ⁴²	1	–	27 ⁴³
884/883	1	2	–	28
883/882	2	3	–	29
882/881	3	4	–	30
881/880	4	5	–	31 ⁴⁴
880/879	5	–	6	32
879/878	6	–	7	33
878/877	7	–	8	34
877/876	8	–	9	35
876/875	9	–	10	36
875/874	10	–	11	37
874/873	11	–	12	38

40. Actual years are equal to accession years.

41. Co-reign with Tibni, sole reign and Asa's regnal years are all after non-accession reckoning.

42. First year not counted according to accession-year reckoning.

43. 1 Kings 16:15, 21–22.

44. 1 Kings 16:23.

Thiele's Regnal Chronology of Jehoshaphat

Thiele's chronology for Jehoshaphat can be summarized in three specific periods for Jehoshaphat's reign (872–848 BCE)—(1) co-reign with Asa (872–869 BCE), (2) sole regency (869–853 BCE), (3) co-reign with Jehoram (853–848 BCE).

Co-regency: Asa and Jehoshaphat (872–869 BCE)

Apparently, Asa raised Jehoshaphat to co-regent during his thirty-ninth year, likely due to a “severe” sickness in Asa's feet. “In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but sought help from physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign” (2 Chron. 16:12–13; 1 Kings 15:23). These years are counted in the twenty-five year reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 22:41–42), despite Jehoshaphat's accession also being dated to the fourth year of Ahab (1 Kings 22:42), which corresponds to the forty-first year of Asa. This is the first clear example in Judah of co-regency or the dual-dating system (Thiele 1994, 83). The beginning of the co-regency began during 872 BCE, the thirty-ninth year of his father Asa and lasted until 869 BCE, the forty-first year of Asa and fourth year of Jehoshaphat (third actual year).

The first year of Jehoshaphat's reign (872 BCE) overlapped with Asa's reign and was not counted as an accession year, meaning that the total number of his regnal years was twenty-four years.

Sole regency: Jehoshaphat (869–853 BCE)

Jehoshaphat became sole regent of Judah in “the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel” (1 Kings 22:41). This was during the third year of Jehoshaphat's total reign. During the sixteen-year period of Jehoshaphat's sole rule, the king of Judah made religious and judicial reforms (2 Chron. 17) and formed an alliance with Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1) by marrying his oldest son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

Co-regency: Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (853–848 BCE)

Either just before the war with Aram (1 Kings 22:1–2; 2 Chron. 18:2) or subsequent to Jehoshaphat's near-death experience at the hands of Ben-hadad's chariots (1 Kings 22:32–33), Jehoshaphat seems to have made Jehoram his co-regent for the last five years of his reign. That a co-regency took place between Jehoshaphat and Jehoram is made evident by comparing the length of the reign of Jehoshaphat (25 years in 1 Kings 22:41; 2 Chron. 20:31), the accession of Ahaziah (Israel) in 2 Kings 22:51, and the accession of Jehoram (I) in 2 Kings 1:17, 3:1.

Table 4–5 Ahab's Reign.

Years	Actual Years	Regnal years (na)	Asa's Regnal Years (na)	Jehoshaphat's Regnal Years (na)
874/873	0 ⁴⁵	1	38	–
873/872	1	2	39	–
872/871	2	3	40	1
871/870	3	4	41	2
870/869	4	5	42	3 ⁴⁶
869/868	5	6	–	4
868/867	6	7	–	5
867/866	7	8	–	6
866/865	8	9	–	7
865/864	9	10	–	8
864/863	10	11	–	9
863/862	11	12	–	10
862/861	12	13	–	11
861/860	13	14	–	12
860/859	14	15	–	13
859/858	15	16	–	14
858/857	16	17	–	15
857/856	17	18	–	16
856/855	18	19	–	17
855/854	19	20	–	18
854/853	20	21	–	19
853/852	21	22	–	20

- “Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the **seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat** [non-accession reckoning; sixteenth according to accession reckoning from the beginning of Jehoshaphat's sole reign] king of Judah, and he reigned **two years over Israel** [853–852 BCE]” (1 Kings 22:51).
- “So [Ahaziah] he died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram became king in his place in the **second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat** [non-accession reckoning; Judah made shift to

45. First year not counted according to accession-year reckoning.

46. 1 Kings 22:41.

non-accession reckoning], king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son” (2 Kings 1:17).

- **“In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah** [non-accession year reckoning; seventeenth according to accession-year reckoning], Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twelve years” (2 Kings 3:1).

Table 4-6 Israel and Judah 854–840 BCE (Non-accession).

Years	Ahab	Jehoshaphat	Jehoram (J)	Ahaziah (I)	Jehoram (I)	Ahaziah (J)
854/853	21	19/16 ⁴⁷	–	–	–	–
853/852	22	20/17 ⁴⁸	1	1	–	–
852/851	–	21/18 ⁴⁹	2 ⁵⁰	2	1	–
851/850	–	22/19	3	–	2	–
850/849	–	23/20	4	–	3	–
849/848	–	24/21	5	–	4	–
848/847 ⁵¹	–	25/22	6/1 ⁵²	–	5	–
847/846	–	–	7/2	–	6	–
846/845	–	–	8/3	–	7	–
845/844	–	–	9/4	–	8	–
844/843	–	–	10/5	–	9	–
843/842	–	–	11/6	–	10	–
842/841	–	–	12/7	–	11	–
841/840 ⁵³	–	–	13/8	–	12	1

47. Non-accession-year reckoning/sole reign.
48. 1 Kings 22:51.
49. 2 Kings 3:1.
50. 2 Kings 1:17.
51. Jehoshaphat died in 848 BCE, but his twenty-fifth regnal year continued into 847 BCE and overlapped with that of Jehoram his son. The reason for the confusion is the regnal pattern of Tishri-Tishri for Judah and Nisan-Nisan for Israel, which offsets the Julian years from the regnal years, as has already been discussed. For a different set of tables that shows this dynamic, see Thiele (1994, 89, 96, 97, 101).
52. Non-accession-year reckoning/sole reign.
53. See note on 848/847 for clarification. The accession of Jehu of Israel and Athaliah of Judah is beyond the scope of the current discussion. For more details, see Thiele (1994, 103–138).

Table 4–7 Sums of Jehoshaphat's Reign.

25 regnal years
24 actual years
4 years of co-reign with Asa
15 years of sole reign
6 years of co-reign with Jehoram (J)
20 years of overlap with Ahab ⁵⁴
1 year of overlap with Ahaziah
4 years of overlap with Jehoram (I)

Table 4–8 Jehoshaphat's Regnal Chronology.

Years	Actual Years	Co-reign Asa ⁵⁵	Sole reign	Co-reign Jehoram	Ahab	Ahaziah (I)	Joram (I)
872/871	0 ⁵⁶	1	–	–	2	–	–
871/870	1	2	–	–	3	–	–
870/869	2	3	–	–	4	–	–
869/868	3	4/1 ⁵⁷	–	–	5	–	–
868/867	4	–	5/2	–	6	–	–
867/866	5	–	6/3	–	7	–	–
866/865	6	–	7/4	–	8	–	–
865/864	7	–	8/5	–	9	–	–
864/863	8	–	9/6	–	10	–	–
863/862	9	–	10/7	–	11	–	–
862/861	10	–	11/8	–	12	–	–
861/860	11	–	12/9	–	13	–	–
860/859	12	–	13/10	–	14	–	–
859/858	13	–	14/11	–	15	–	–
858/857	14	–	15/12	–	16	–	–
857/856	15	–	16/13	–	17	–	–

54. Including co-reign with Asa.

55. The co-reign of Asa, sole reign, and co-reign of Jehoram are all according to accession-year reckoning.

56. The skipping of the first year in the actual years is due to its overlap with the reign of Asa and not due to a change to the non-accession-year reckoning.

57. Official regnal years/years of sole reign after the death of Asa.

Years	Actual Years	Co-reign Asa	Sole reign	Co-reign Jehoram	Ahab	Ahaziah (I)	Joram (I)
856/855	16	–	17/14	–	18	–	–
855/854	17	–	18/15	–	19	–	–
854/853	18	–	19/16	–	20	–	–
853/852	19	–	–	20/17/1 ⁵⁸	21	1 ⁵⁹	–
852/851	20	–	–	21/18/2	–	2	1 ⁶⁰
851/850	21	–	–	22/19/3	–	–	2
850/849	22	–	–	23/20/4	–	–	3
849/848	23	–	–	24/21/5	–	–	4
848/847	24	–	–	25/22/6	–	–	5

Conclusion of Regnal Chronology

This discussion has attempted to establish the regnal chronology of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and Ahab king of Israel by accumulating and dissecting their chronological synchronisms. After exhausting the relevant texts and kings of Judah and Israel, it should be clear to the reader that a careful application of Thiele’s dating principles shows the Masoretic Text to be exceptionally accurate with regards to Jehoshaphat’s chronology. Additionally, this section has laid the groundwork for our discussion of the internal relationship between Ahab and Jehoshaphat’s kingdoms. By establishing when and how long each of these kings reigned, we are now able to delve further into the interaction between these two kings over the twenty years they reigned contemporaneously.

58. Jehoshaphat’s official regnal years/years after the death of Asa/Jehoram’s official regnal years.
59. 1 Kings 22:51.
60. 2 Kings 1:17–18: the “second year of Jehoram of Judah” is the second year of Jehoram’s co-regency and corresponds to the twenty-second regnal year of Jehoshaphat, as the events of 2 Kings 3 make clear.

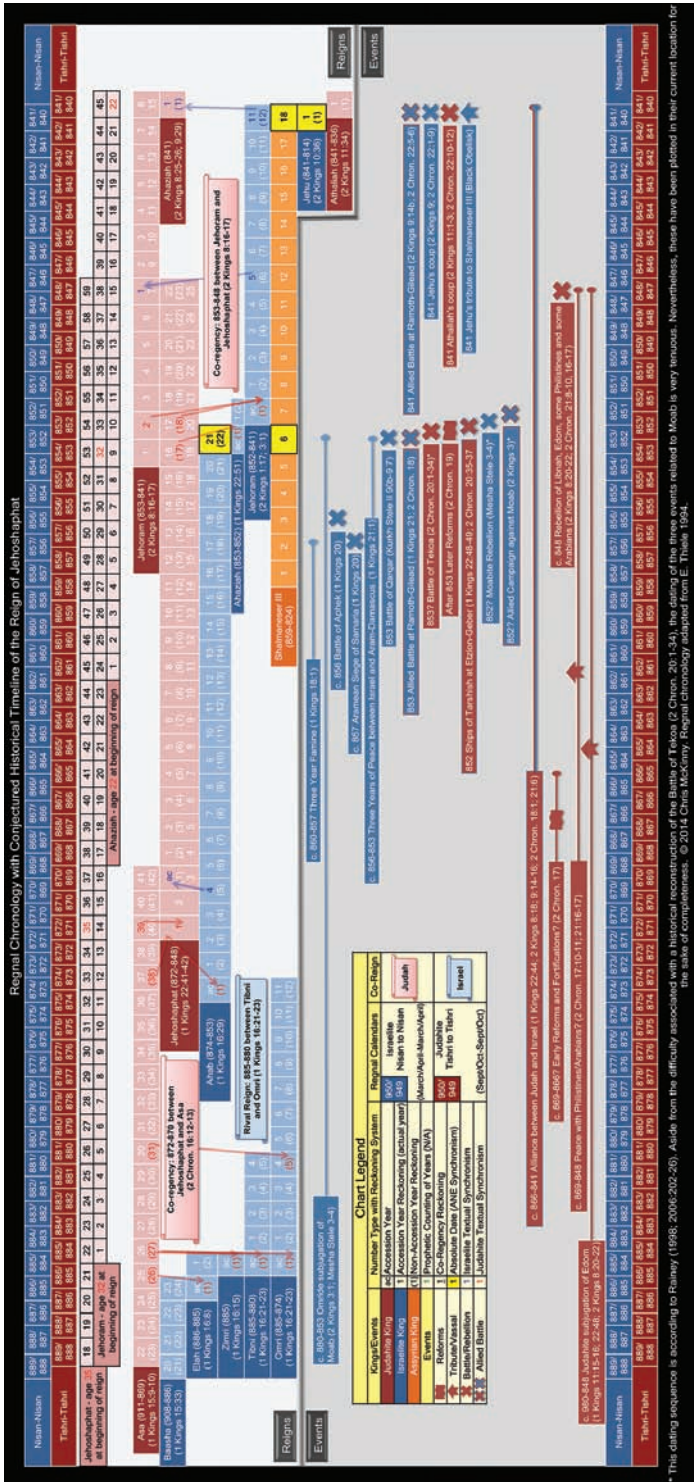


Figure 4-1 Regnal Chronology and Conjectured Historical Timeline of the Reign of Jehoshaphat.

1 Kings 22:43—Cult Assessment

22:43, like the preceding record of Jehoshaphat's synchronism, age, length of reign, and queen mother is part of the formulaic expression that is included in every Judahite and Israelite king's characterization. With regard to the context in Kings, this passage serves to give Jehoshaphat a passing grade in relation to the cult. This characterization relates exactly to Asa, who in turn did not quite measure up to the type-progenitor, David (1 Kings 15:11).

1 Kings 22:44—Peace With Israel

22:44 recounts the peace with Israel from Jehoshaphat's perspective. This peace had already been manifested at the beginning of the chapter from Ahab's perspective (22:2, 5). The brief inclusion here shows that this was a mutual agreement and not one-sided in Israel/Ahab's favor. This is a significant verse in the larger context of the conflicts between Israel and Judah. It is meant to both show the cessation of the war of attrition (i.e., "war all of their days") that had marked Judah and Israel relations since the division of the Kingdom and the period of peaceful cooperation that would ensue during the period of the Omrides. Specifically, this verse marks the conclusion of hostile relations that were mentioned in connection with Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:30; 15:6), Abijah and Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:7), and Asa and Baasha (1 Kings 15:16). This means that a state of war existed between Judah and Israel for the first fifty years after the division of the Kingdom (c. 931–880 BCE).

As we have seen, the progress towards peace likely started during the early part of the reign of Omri but reached fruition with the marriage alliance between Jehoram of Judah, son of Jehoshaphat, and Athaliah, daughter of Ahab (cf. 2 Kings 8:18) (see discussion below). Therefore, this verse has ramifications for the remainder of Judah's allied involvement with the Omrides these include: the battle of Ramoth-gilead with Ahab (22:1–36), the failed Tarshish venture at Etzion-geber without Ahaziah (22:48–50), the allied campaign against Mesha (2 Kings 3), and the allied defense of Ramoth-gilead against Hazael (2 Kings 9, especially 9:14). The above events correspond to the time period of 853–841 BCE; however, the start of peaceful relations or at least cessation of hostilities must have begun already in the time of Omri and Asa (c. 880–870 BCE).

As we have shown above, the detail of "after some years" at the beginning of the Chronicler's account of the Battle of Ramoth-gilead (2 Chron. 18:1–2) seems to indicate that Jehoshaphat waited until the end of his reign to go down to Ahab's

kingdom. This might show that he possessed a level of mistrust for the northern kingdom and the Omride dynasty. However, it is unclear if Ahab felt this mistrust as well. Why would there be mistrust from Jehoshaphat? Perhaps he had leftover fears from the incessant wars between his father Asa and Baasha's dynasty (1 Kings 15:32). What had the Omride regents done (or not done) to calm Jehoshaphat's fears of further attacks along his northern border in Benjamin? In other words—why make an alliance?

Answering the question will provide for both a better biblical understanding of Jehoshaphat and a clearer understanding of his reign's impact upon the rise of Judah as a territorial nation-state in the Iron IIA. This train of thought is strengthened by the fact that Jehoshaphat does not merely make one allied agreement with the Omride line, but three distinct agreements punctuated by largely unsuccessful ventures with the rest of the Omride regents. First, the defeat at Ramoth-gilead with Ahab (1 Kings 22:1–36; 2 Chron. 18) emboldened Aram-Damascus to ravage Israel in revenge and allowed Moab to throw off its Israelite oppressors (2 Kings 3:4–8). Second, a short-lived Elath/Red Sea Port with Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:47–49; 2 Chron. 20:35–37) that ultimately may have led to the loss of Judah's suzerainty over Edom in the days of Jehoram of Judah. Third, quelling the Moabite rebellion with Jehoram and Judah's vassal Edom (2 Kings 3:4–27). This was the most successful of the three ventures but was ultimately repulsed by Moab.

The marriage alliance arranged by Ahab and Jehoshaphat cannot be dated with great precision.⁶¹ Two dating requirements may be gleaned from the relevant passages (2 Chron. 17:2, 18:1–2). (1) There must be a gap of time (perhaps 1–3 years) for Jehoshaphat to fortify the southern Ephraimite territories against Israel, a clear defensive action, which constitutes at the very least a recognition of the potential for conflict (see below for discussion on the reliability of this passage). (2) There must also be a gap of at least several years after the marriage alliance between the northern and southern kingdoms was in place, as made evident in 2 Chronicles 18:2. The alliance would most likely have occurred after Jehoshaphat's fortifications in Ephraim (2 Chron. 17:2), which are clearly to protect against Israelite aggression. These fortifications would probably have taken a few years to

61. Thompson sees 2 Chronicles 18:2 as following directly after 1 Kings 22:2, meaning the alliance would have occurred sometime toward the end of Ahab's wars with Ben-hadad (ca. 856 BCE), three years before Jehoshaphat's visit to Ahab in 853 BCE. The problem here is that the "three years" of 1 Kings 22:2 are explicitly tied to the "three years" of peace between Israel and Aram (1994, 286).

build after his rise to sole regency, perhaps from 869–866 BCE.⁶² Jehoshaphat's visit to Samaria "at the end of (some) years" can be dated with some precision to 853 BCE, the eve of the battle of Ramoth-gilead, since the events of this battle resulted in the termination of Ahab's twenty-one years on the throne (Thiele 1994). With these two pieces of information, it is possible to provide the probable range of 866–856 BCE for the beginning of the alliance of Ahab and Jehoshaphat.

In line with the above argumentation, it could conceivably be argued that the initial alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Chron. 18:1) occurred during 856 BCE, on the basis that Judah was absent from the two earlier confrontations with Aram in 857 BCE (Samaria) and 856 BCE (Aphek). On the other hand, there is no mention of Judah in the Kurkh Stele, which recounts the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. At the time of this battle, the marriage alliance would probably have been in place.

What was the nature of the initial marriage alliance? Was it strictly a non-aggression/trade rights pact?⁶³ Or was it a full-blown joint military alliance with equal offensive and defensive aid responsibilities for each nation? Of these two, the former seems more likely, as Ahab's fawning behavior towards Jehoshaphat on the eve of the battle of Ramoth-gilead (2 Chron. 18:2) suggests Judah had not yet consented to join Israel in her military program. This reasoning is enforced when it is considered that an Aramean-Judahite agreement may have still been in effect from the days of Asa and Baasha (1 Kings 15:18–19). Perhaps there was some diplomatic posturing between Aram and Israel at the battle of Qarqar with the purpose of currying Jehoshaphat's affection.⁶⁴ It was in each of their best interests to draw Judah into their camp. For Damascus, an allied southern kingdom would provide Ben-hadad the luxury of a second front against Ahab, which would be a devastating blow to Israel's interests, as made evident by the reign of Baasha.

62. For a further discussion of the historicity of the Chronicler's attestation of Asa and Jehoshaphat's fortifications in Ephraim (2 Chron. 15:8; 17:2; cf. 25:9–13) see my analysis in the Benjamin section of the archaeological survey of Judah. Additionally, I will address this issue in an in-depth future study.

63. Basically, maintaining the status quo militaristically (i.e., Jehoshaphat kept his garrisons in Ephraim) and opening communication and trades routes for financial benefit. This option seems more accurate, because, as we have argued to this point, Jehoshaphat and Ahab were on near-equal footing with regards to kingdom strength. Therefore, this treaty would have been between two equal parties—not a superior over an inferior.

64. This suggestion is plausible, but it remains an argument from silence. Using the same reasoning one could argue that Jehoshaphat's forces were present at Qarqar with Ahab acting as his overlord. Within this interpretive framework, Jehoshaphat would not need to be mentioned.

For Israel, a peaceful Judahite border was a necessity for its existence, and a militaristic alliance was a requirement for both moving into Aramean territory and maintaining northern Transjordan dominance. Ahab recognized the strength of Jehoshaphat and knew that their two kingdoms together could potentially strike a devastating blow to Aramean interests on the Syrian tableland (i.e., Ramoth-gilead). Ironically, Ahab had sought to prevent his own death by dressing as a common soldier while his ally, Jehoshaphat, dressed in his royal robes (1 Kings 22:30; 2 Chron. 18:29). Perhaps Ahab intended to rid himself of two rivals (Jehoshaphat and Ben-hadad) in one fell swoop.

As has been argued in the previous chapter, Jehoshaphat was no mere potential vassal to Ahab. The opening of Chronicles' version of the fateful Ramoth-gilead affair drives home this point by pointing out the disparity between Jehoshaphat's actual standing and his own perception: "Although Jehoshaphat had wealth and great honor, he entered into a marriage alliance with Ahab" (2 Chron. 18:1; Myers's translation *contra* ESV and RSV). The *vav* contained in the narrative preterit at the beginning of 2 Chronicles 18:1 should be interpreted as concessive and not temporal.⁶⁵

This alliance was formally ratified with the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, to Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram.⁶⁶ The references to Athaliah in 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 as חַבְרַמִּי should be understood as "granddaughter" of Omri. On the other hand, the Lucianic recension of the LXX reads quga;thr Acaab, which is echoed in Josephus (*Ant* 8.15.3; 9.7.1). It is popular among scholars to conclude that Athaliah was Omri's daughter and Ahab's sister (Thiehl 1992b, 511–512), as this apparently fits the idea that Judah was being "ruled" by the Omrides. The fact remains that apart from 2 Kings 8:26 and its parallel passage in Chronicles (22:2) the text unequivocally demonstrates that Athaliah was the offspring of Ahab and Jezebel. In 2 Kings 8:18 Athaliah's parentage is described as "the daughter of Ahab." In 2 Kings 8:27 Jehoram is referred to as חֲתָן בֵּית־אֶחָזָב.

The formulaic expression is what one would expect from the writers of Kings and Chronicles, as it is used with regularity to express offspring of David, despite having no direct paternal connection. The singular occurrence of the expression is due to the singular occurrence of a royal daughter ascending to the throne of Judah. Interestingly, a similar expression is applied to the decimator of Omri's line,

65. For a discussion of the so-called "waw consecutive," "waw conversive," or narrative preterit see Longacre (1992, 178).

66. Contra Barrick's highly speculative premise of several different marriages of unnamed offspring of Jehoshaphat and Ahab/Jezebel (2001, 9–25).

Jehu, in the Black Obelisk. Here Jehu is referred to as “*Jehu (Ia-ū-a)* (the man) of Bit-Ḥumri” (COS 2.270).

The giving of Athaliah to Jehoram (instead of Ahaziah to a Judahite princess) probably shows the elevated status of Jehoshaphat in Ahab’s view. It would be an exaggeration to say that Judah was “first among equals” with Israel; however, ancient Near Eastern marriage alliances were well thought out, with all political ramifications weighed carefully. The gender arrangement of this marriage alliance might show that Jehoshaphat was on equal standing with Ahab in the sphere of 9th century BCE southern Levantine politics. The situation is similar to Solomon marrying Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kings 3:1) and Ramses II’s son marrying the Hittite princess after the battle of Kadesh. Several scholars have pointed to David’s marriages as having a primarily political purpose (Ahinoam (Jezreel), Abigail (Carmel), Maacah (Geshur) in 2 Samuel 3:3). Although these marriages are portrayed as occurring before David became king (at least the Judahite marriages), these marriages apparently carried important political weight (e.g., Levenson and Halpern 1980, 507–518; Rainey 1982, 59).⁶⁷

1 Kings 22:45—The Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah

I have already stated my belief that “the book of the Chronicles of the Kings⁶⁸ of Judah” was the actual source materials for the writer of Kings. What remains in this discussion is the question of whether or not the Chronicler makes use of this source or other sources (e.g., “the book of the Chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel”).

67. Ahinoam would have provided David with a northern connection for stabilizing the region with the most important trade routes in the kingdom. Abigail gave David a strong Judahite connection that reminded his powerbase that they were not neglected. Maacah, perhaps the most politically motivated of all, enabled David to have a measure of rule over a small Aramean kingdom within his borders, which in turn provided him a buffer zone between Israel and the Aramean nation-states to the north and northwest (Levenson and Halpern 1980, 507–518). A similar example of this phenomenon can be seen in Josiah’s marriage to Hamutal of the Levitical city of Libnah (e.g., 2 Kings 23:31; cf. Josh. 21:13) and Zebidah of Rumah (in the Galilee?) (2 Kings 23:36) (see Elitzur 1994 for discussion).

68. 1 Kings 22:46–50 is placed in 1 Kings 16:28 before the reign of Jehoshaphat in the LXX.

1 Kings 22:46—Cult Reforms

Contextually, this passage ties Jehoshaphat's cultic reforms to his father's. This is in line with his main characterization in 22:42; however, it adds the specific activity of the "extermination of the remnant of the male cult prostitutes who remained in the days of his father Asa." This passage has a clear cultic, theological context and, therefore, is beyond our scope.⁶⁹

1 Kings 23:47—Judahite Sovereignty Over Edom

23:47 is contextually tied to 23:48–49. This is primarily significant because of the geopolitical significance of the statement that "there was no king in Edom; a deputy was king."⁷⁰ There are at least two points of consideration for this verse—(1) its context with regards to Edomite-Judahite relations and (2) its direct connection to Etzion-geber as a port. On this first point, there appear to be three stages in Edomite-Judahite relations from the time of David until the reign of Jehoram. The first of these stages relates to David's victory over the Edomites (2 Samuel 8:14; cf. 1 Kings 11:15–16) and Solomon's building of Eloth/Etzion-geber in the land of Edom (1 Kings 9:26).⁷¹ The second stage in the narrative of Kings is Jehoshaphat's sovereignty and setting an unnamed "deputy" (בִּצֵּן) over the southern polity (22:47). The third stage is the total loss of Judahite hegemony over Edom during the days of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20–23). This last stage makes explicit reference to the Edomites "setting up a king" (לָמַן) of their

69. It should be noted that there appears to be a growing consensus that the typical translation of "male cult prostitutes" for מִשְׁדֵּק (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7) has no correlation with any ancient Near Eastern institution of cult prostitution male or otherwise (Day 2004; Westenholz 1989; Stuckey 1997). This verse is absent from the Chronicler's greatly expanded version of Jehoshaphat's reign, but it might be re-worked in 2 Chronicles 17:6.

70. The LXX's rendition of this account is flawed on three points. 1.) It is misplaced after the reign of Ahab. 2.) It mistranslates Suri÷aˆ for סוּרִי. 3.) It uses Nasib for bxn. On this last point, the translators of the LXX may have been influenced by 2 Samuel 8:14 καὶ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ Ἰδουμαίᾳ φρουράν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰδουμαίᾳ. Compare the use of Νασιβ for the "Philistine garrison" in 1 Samuel 10:5; 13:3–4. In any case, the LXX does not use this transliteration for other attestations of where it clearly refers to a crown-appointed official (see HALOT 1.714–715, e.g. 1 Kings 4:5–7; 5:7, 30; 9:23; 22:48; 2 Chron. 8:10).

71. It is unclear (both historically and contextually) if Judahite sovereignty of Edom survived after Hadad's return (1 Kings 11:14), the division of the kingdom (1 Kings 12), and Shishak's invasion (1 Kings 14:25).

own” (2 Kings 8:20), which would have been in direct violation of their previous subordinate relationship with Judah. All of these developments are caricatured by the “end-point” of Judahite control—the port of Etzion-geber on the Red Sea. This is highly significant, because Judahite control of this port necessitates significant control over the biblical Negev (i.e., the Beersheba Basin) and the Aravah (cf. Deut. 1:7; 2:8) south of the Dead Sea until the northern shores of the Red Sea.

Until recently, the significance of Judahite-Edomite relations in the reigns of Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Azariah has been related to the control of the Red Sea port of Etzion-geber⁷² (1 Kings 9:26–27; 22:48–49; 2 Kings 14:22). However, the discovery of significant Iron IIA copper mining and smelting activity at the Edomite sites of Khirbet en-Nahas (Levy and Najjar 2006; Levy et al. 2004; Ben-Yosef et al. 2010; Finkelstein 2005b; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2008) and Timna (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012) has added another surprising element to the entire discussion of southern Levantine politics and economy. With regards to the former site, not much was known before the recent excavations led by Levy under the auspices of the University of California at San Diego.

Almost immediately, it became clear that there had been substantial metallurgic activity from the 12th–9th centuries BCE with a large fort being constructed in the 10th century BCE (Levy et al. 2004, 865–79). Up until this discovery, it had been assumed that the Edomites did not become a recognizable political entity until they were forcibly organized by the Neo-Assyrians in the late 8th century BCE (Bennett 1983; Bartlett 1972; Horowitz 1993; Bartlett 1982; Finkelstein 2005b, 124–125). Regarding Timna, Ben-Yosef’s new excavations (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012) have led the way in showing that the main period of metallurgic activity there coincided with the Iron IIA and not the Late Bronze Age as previously thought (Rothenberg 1972). The concurrent production at both of these sites is of utmost significance for reconstructing the political vitality of the polities of Edom, Judah, Israel Aram-Damascus, Philistine Gath and the desert tribes (e.g., Tel Masos) in the Iron IIA. For example, Finkelstein connects the copper activity at Khirbet en-Nahas with the Omride architecture on the Medeba Plateau (Finkelstein and Lipschits 2010) to support his belief that the Omrides controlled the mines in the mid-9th century BCE. He reconstructs the setting like this,

Historical considerations seem to indicate that the rise of Judah took place in the later phase of the late Iron IIA, in the second half of the 9th century b.c.e., and 2 Kgs 12:19 hints that, as a result of the expansion of Hazael, the southern kingdom turned from the sphere of Omride hegemony to Damascene vassaldom, Damascus used the southern kingdom in order to advance its interests in the region. (Finkelstein 2013b, 126)

72. See below for identification.

For the sake of argument, if we allow for Omride hegemony over all of the copper trade at Khirbet en-Nahas, would that hegemony have extended all the way to Timna and the Aravah? Is it not just as probable that there was concurrent Judahite control over Timna or some type of joint control over both of these locations? Finkelstein readily admits that the pottery assemblage of the first half and second half of the 9th century BCE are virtually indistinguishable (2013b, 125–126). So what evidence necessitates that the Judahite sites of Beersheba, Arad, Lachish and Tamar (En-Hazeva) need to postdate the Omride demise? He argues based on historical considerations that Judah was a vassal first to Israel under the Omrides and then Hazael throughout the 9th century BCE. We shall discuss this assessment in our reconstruction of Jehoshaphat's reign.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that metallurgic trade is not the only factor for determining geo-politics. Certainly, it is an important economic factor, but I would posit that we need to be careful in recreating the history of the southern Levant based solely, or almost solely on copper trade. Especially, when a very good argument can be made for the consistency of this production and trade within the confines of the United Monarchy and early Judah in the 10th–9th century BCE (Levy, Najjar, and Higham 2010). The significance of these finds is that we can now say with certainty that the Edomites played an important role in the politics of the early Iron Age. It is also possible that their copper production is the background of such texts as 1 Kings 7:14–16, 27, 30, 38, 45, 47; 8:64; 14:27. It is important to grasp that neither the Bible nor any other source makes direct mention of Edomite metallurgic activity. Conversely, the references above make mention of Judahite/Edomite relations only within the confines of the Red Sea port and the destinations of Tarshish and Ophir (see below). Regardless of one's views of the historicity or the dating of these texts, it seems clear that they are recorded to show the uniqueness of the types of goods that could be obtained by having a port with access to the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa (e.g., gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks [1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:21]). This is an important distinction, because the archaeological reality of the copper trade in the Iron IIA does not necessarily preclude the existence of long-distant trafficking of luxurious and expensive items (Beitzel 2010). In fact, there is physical evidence of existence of "Ophir" gold from Tell Qasile, albeit at a much later date in the 8th century BCE (Maisler 1951, 266).

1 Kings 22:48–49—The Failed Israelite-Judahite Red Sea Enterprise

In the context of Kings, this passage accomplishes two significant developments for the portrayal of the reign of Jehoshaphat. First, Jehoshaphat like his predecessor

Solomon was apparently able to “build ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold,” however this was ultimately unsuccessful, perhaps due to the wind conditions of the northern shore of the Red Sea (i.e., “wrecked at Etzion-geber”). There is a direct syntactic connection between the accumulation of the gold in Solomon’s temple (e.g., 1 Kings 9:28; 10:11) to the forfeiture of that gold to Shishak in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:26–27) to the re-accumulation of “gold” and other “holy gifts” for the temple by Asa (1 Kings 15:15) to the forfeiture of that “gold” to Ben-hadad by Asa for procurement of Aram-Damascus’ military aid (1 Kings 15:18–19). This provides the immediate context for Jehoshaphat’s foray into gold retrieval. Jehoshaphat’s quest is portrayed as an attempt to return the cult in Jerusalem to the Solomonic era.⁷³ I do believe that this marks the end of the writer of Kings’ attempts at showing the positive acquirement of gold as a means of grading a particular Davidic king against the Solomonic type. The distinction is clear between Jehoshaphat’s failed attempt at “gold from Ophir” and the complete lack of target destination or goods in Azariah’s matter-of-fact building of Elath and restoration to Judah (2 Kings 14:22). This latter passage does not fit the sequence outlined above.

However, it should be noted that the above passages are only part of a long sequence of Kings’ record of gold, silver, and other treasures being plundered from Jerusalem by various entities. These various plunderings are tangible literary touchstones in the slow ebbing away of Kings’ view of a Solomonic golden foundation. 2 Kings 12:18 records the next event in the sequence with Jehoash (Joash) forfeiting the gold from Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah to Hazael. Cross-reference also the dedication of tribute between Amaziah and Jehoash (2 Kings 14:13–14), Ahaz and Tigalath-Pileser III (2 Kings 16:7–9), Hezekiah and Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:14–16), Jehoahaz and Neco (2 Kings 23:32–35), Jehoiachin and Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:12–13) (see table below).

73. It seems probable that the various records of forfeitures of treasure assigned to the kings of Judah originates from court registers (e.g., Rainey and Notley 2006, 171–174). Despite this, in my estimation it seems that the inclusion of these forfeitures in conjunction with Jehoshaphat’s pursuance of “Ophir gold” points to a larger literary theme in which the redactor of Kings is pointing back to the days of Solomon. This can be seen in the description of Solomon’s palatial vessels, which are described as, “drinking vessels of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 10:22).

Table 4–9 The Plunderers of Jerusalem from the Book of Kings.

Judahite King	Conqueror	Polity	Reference
Rehoboam	Shishak	Egypt	1 Kings 14:26–27
Asa	Ben-hadad	Aram-Damascus	1 Kings 15:18–19
Joash	Hazael	Aram-Damascus	2 Kings 12:18
Amaziah	Jehoash	Israel	2 Kings 14:13–14
Ahaz	Tigalath-Pilaser III	Assyria	2 Kings 16:7–9
Hezekiah	Sennacherib	Assyria	2 Kings 18:14–16
Jehoahaz	Necho	Egypt	2 Kings 23:32–35
Jehoiachin	Nebuchadnezzar	Babylon	2 Kings 24:12–13

This list is primarily significant on account of the names that are not included in the sequence—Abijah (913–911), Jehoshaphat (872–848), Jehoram (853–841), Ahaziah (841), Azariah (792–740), Jotham (750–731), Manasseh (697–642), Amon (642–640), and Josiah (640–609). If we remove the very short reigns of Abijah and Amon, and Manasseh since his tribute to Assyria is attested to elsewhere (2 Chron. 33:10; ANET 291; ANET 294) we are left with three periods of around thirty years that do not show Judah providing tribute to any overlord. These three periods would correspond to the time of Jehoshaphat–Ahaziah (872–841), Azariah–Jotham (768–740) and the reign of Josiah (640–609).

With regards to these periods, there are several points of comparison. All three periods are marked by the absence of a major regional power. Each period is associated with territorial sovereignty and expansion. Finally, in the case of the first two sets, they coincide with a similar period of strength in the northern kingdom of Israel.⁷⁴ In Israel, these periods correspond to the Omride dynasty (880–841 BCE) and the second half of the Nimshide dynasty or Jeroboam II's reign (793–752 BCE). This latter period is marked by unparalleled growth and prosperity in both the northern and southern kingdoms (Zukerman and Shai 2006; Maeir 2012, 49–56; Maeir 2004, 319–334). On account of this, Rainey argues for the renewal of peaceful relations between Israel and Judah through the release of the imprisoned Amaziah (2006, 217–220).

The striking similarities between these two periods and the absence of any record of tribute paid from Jerusalem would seem to further strengthen the idea

74. This obviously cannot apply to Josiah's reign since Israel was destroyed nearly a century before his reign began in 722 BCE.

that the reign of Jehoshaphat and his immediate successors should not be associated with Judah's vassalhood to the Omrides. Put another way, the writer of Kings was willing to negatively identify eight separate Davidic monarchs as having paid tribute to a foreign entity from the treasures of the Solomonic temple. Half of the eight received the characterization of "he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh" (Asa, Joash, Amaziah, and Hezekiah). If the writer of Kings was willing to identify Judah's inferiority to foreign entities, including Israel over Amaziah, why would he not likewise record Jehoshaphat's inferiority to the Omrides? What good reason would a 6th century redactor have for excluding the hypothetical vassalhood or tribute of Jehoshaphat over that of his above predecessors and antecedents? It would seem probable that if Jehoshaphat's Judah was inferior to the Omrides there would at least be implicit evidence within the Book of Kings pointing to this reality.

The second significant development in 22:48–49 is the continued relationship of Jehoshaphat to the Omrides. The inclusion of Ahaziah in this section dates this activity to 852–851 BCE since Ahaziah only reigned two years before succumbing to injuries suffered from a fall in the palace (2 Kings 1). Regarding this maritime activity, several contextual questions should first be asked before determining the historical plausibility of the record. First, where were these ships supposed to go—Ophir or Tarshish?

Beitzel makes a compelling argument that Ophir and Tarshish were different places (compare 1 Kings 10:11 to 10:22). Through an examination of all of the available epigraphic evidence for Tarshish, Beitzel claims that Tarshish existed in the Mediterranean and not in Africa. Ophir, on the other hand, should be located either on the African or Arabian side of the Red Sea (Rainey and Notley 2006, 203). Beitzel goes on to make a case for Hiram and Solomon's joint expedition to Tarshish as originating from the port city of Joppa⁷⁵ and another expedition starting from Etzion-geber/Elath that went to Ophir (2010, 38–66). The outlier in the discussion is 1 Kings 22:48–49 and its conflated reflection in 2 Chronicles 35–37. On this point Beitzel concludes,

It is very possible that the Jehoshaphat narratives may represent an evolutionary application of the expression 'the ship(s) of Tarshish,' rather than reflecting its native original denotation. Whatever the case, I would urge caution against allowing the Jehoshaphat corpus to dictate and categorically redefine the meaning of the expression 'the ship(s) of Tarshish,' inasmuch as this is the only known material in antiquity, biblical or otherwise, explicitly to locate the ships of Tarshish, and even the site of Tarshish itself, somewhere beyond the Mediterranean Sea. (2010, 45–46)

75. The newly announced "Ioppa Maritima" project may help illuminate the dating and construction of Joppa's ancient harbor.

If we accept Beitzel's argument, then a second relevant question must be asked. Does the inclusion of Tarshish and Ophir imply Phoenician involvement with the Etzion-geber enterprise? Ostensibly, if such Phoenician participation took place then it would have been related to Ethbaal I (father of Jezebel) or his successor Baal-Azor I. An argument can be made that such participation may be offered in Ahaziah's offering to "let my servants go with your servants in the ships (v. 49)." It would seem that joint Phoenician-Israelite seafaring may be seen as a plausible historical reality, as has been shown in the excavations of Tel Dor, which was active as an Israelite port in the late Iron IIA (Stern 1990; Finkelstein 2013b, 78–80). So therefore, Israelite/Phoenician expertise would theoretically be something that Ahaziah could offer to his southern ally. However, it should likewise be noted that the record in Kings explicitly states that Jehoshaphat refused Ahaziah's help, so the point is moot. One last point, within the context of Kings there is no explicit reason for Jehoshaphat's refusal of Ahaziah's help. This refusal is highly interesting because it represents a ripe theological opportunity for the writer of Kings to extol the virtues of Jehoshaphat's refusal of the "evil" (22:52) Omride dynasty. And yet, the connection was not made. In fact, as we shall see in Chronicles, the exact opposite theological point is made by the Chronicler (2 Chron. 20:35–37), who attributes the destruction of the ships as punishment from Yahweh on account of Jehoshaphat's "joining with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly" (20:35). So by virtue of the lack of theological construing, it seems logical to interpret Jehoshaphat's refusal as an example of territorial sovereignty within the confines of an allied, trade agreement. Perhaps Jehoshaphat's refusal related to him not wanting to share in the profits of such an enterprise.

Based on what I have argued above regarding 1 Kings 22:47–49 within its immediate and larger context, I suggest the following tri-part contextual interpretation. (1) Jehoshaphat maintained and perhaps fostered Edomite subjugation (v. 47). (2) Jehoshaphat's reign was characterized by a valiant, but ultimately failed attempt to return to the "golden" age of Solomon⁷⁶ via the Etzion-geber port.

76. Jehoshaphat and Uzziah's Red Sea revenues would theoretically have been less than Solomon's since they did not possess the northern international routes of the Jezreel Valley and Transjordan, which would have enhanced the national economy and the effectiveness of the Red Sea-Negev routes. With regards to Solomonic trade and economy, Ishida writes the following: "By taking advantage of the geographical position, Solomon shrewdly increased the revenue not only by collecting toll from caravans passing through his kingdom but also by launching international trade. His active operations in diplomacy and trade made him wealthy and raised his prestige in the international community. As a result, Jerusalem became one of the important centers into which various information and technology came from every corner of the world. Under the stimulus of foreign cultures the royal court served as the center of intellectual creativity. The legendary tradition of Solomon's fabulous wisdom must have stemmed from the Solomonic court with its international surroundings" (Ishida 1992).

(3) Jehoshaphat possibly refused Ahaziah's help, because he did not want to share in the profits of the enterprise.

1 Kings 22:50—Death and Burial

The section ends with the recording of Jehoshaphat's death and burial in the city of David. This verse like the rest of the kings of Judah falls in line with the "Death and Burial Formula" noted by Halpern and Vanderhooft (1991, 179–244).⁷⁷ The scroll of 1 Kings ends with the reign characterization of Ahaziah in 1 Kings 22:51–53. With our commentary on the text of 1 Kings 22:41–50 now complete, we will now begin the final section of this book—an archaeological survey of Judah in the late Iron IIA.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an in-depth analysis of Kings' account of the reign of Jehoshaphat. We briefly examined the lineage and regnal chronology of Jehoshaphat in relation to his father (Asa) and successor (Jehoram), which firmly places Jehoshaphat's twenty-five year reign in the second quarter of the 9th century BCE (i.e., the late Iron IIA). Of particular importance is my discussion of Judah's "peace with Israel" (22:44) and her sovereignty over Edom (22:47–49), which led to a Red Sea trade enterprise with Ahaziah of Israel. These last two elements together with the Chronicler's statement that Jehoshaphat (and Asa) fortified cities in Judah and Ephraim (2 Chron. 15:8; 17:2; cf. 25:9–13) have direct bearing upon our discussion of the archaeology of Judah in the late Iron IIA. We shall examine the historicity of these texts through our analysis of the archaeological remains below. Although it should be noted that archaeological evidence alone will not reflect directly on Jehoshaphat. An extensive archaeological assessment of Judah in the 9th century BCE should determine the nature of Judah's settlement during the late Iron IIA and show whether or not it was a centralized state. If this can be determined then it would underscore the plausibility of the biblical narratives that we have discussed above.

77. Beitzel points out that the inclusion of the additional material in 1 Kings 22:47–49 following the formulaic citation (i.e., the end of the "Death and Burial Formula") in v. 45 stands out as unique among the Judahite king's characterizations (2010, 43–45).

An Archaeological Survey of Judah in the Late Iron IIA

The Iron Age IIA remains one of the most hotly debated issues in the archaeology of Israel and Jordan (A. Mazar 2011; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2011; Finkelstein, Mazar, and Schmidt 2007; Levy et al. 2004; Levy and Najar 2006). Obviously, the majority of the attention has been associated with the 10th century BCE and the understanding of the United Kingdom (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006); however, the archaeology of the 9th century BCE (i.e., the early Divided Kingdom) and the ending of the Iron Age IIA have received considerable attention as of late (Finkelstein 2005a; A. Mazar 2005).

Using Archaeology as a Source for Reconstructing History

The impact of these debates is far reaching; however, most of the historical issues are related to the 10th century BCE and the United Monarchy. In our period of discussion, the mid-9th century BCE (within the second half of the Iron IIA), there are no fixed chronological benchmarks to determine specific archaeological strata. On account of this, historians and archaeologists specifically date various strata according to their own reconstruction of the surrounding historical realities. In each case, these reconstructions are tied to one's opinions regarding the reliability of the biblical textual data against the reliability of the archaeological record.

For an example of this, one should review Finkelstein's interpretation of Judah during the time of the Omrides and Aramean Oppression (see full quote above in Chapter Two). By Finkelstein's own admission the sites of Arad and Beersheba have an Iron Age IIA occupation level (see below for discussion), which would seemingly be in accordance with the subjugation of Edom (1 Kings 22:47) and the Red Sea port (1 Kings 22:48–49) under Jehoshaphat. However, he concludes that “based on historical considerations” these sites (i.e., Judah's southern expansion) were only settled by Judah under Aramean sovereignty during the reigns of Hazael and Joash (cf. 2 Kings 12) (Finkelstein 2013b, 126). Along the same rationale, Finkelstein has sought to re-date the 9th century BCE fortifications at Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah) to the mid-9th century BCE under Joash instead of the early-9th century BCE under Asa (1 Kings 15:22), as has been commonly asserted (Finkelstein 2012a).

It is clear that his “historical considerations” are related to a belief that Judah only underwent its state formation in the 8th century BCE (Finkelstein 2005a). However, when the archaeological evidence can be synchronized with the biblical data outlined above, does not that show that Finkelstein's reconstruction suffers from circular reasoning? In other words, Finkelstein has stated that reliance upon archaeology as a primary source mitigates the more problematic texts, because it is an “objective” source (2013b, 5, 85). In this particular case, the Judahite construction of Arad and Beersheba could be dated either during the time of the Omrides (850–840s BCE) or Judah during the time of Hazael's oppression (830–820s BCE). Finkelstein's dating to the time of Hazael is based on his own historical reconstruction (which he claims is archaeological) and not on archaeological evidence, which cannot be a determining factor in this specific case.¹ With regards to the preference of using archaeology over ancient texts for historical reconstruction, Na'aman offers the following lucid comments,

Any discussion of the biblical text presents enormous difficulties; these problems have been deliberated many times in the past and need no reiteration. Nonetheless, there is no justification to the claim of some archaeologists that their data should be preferred over that of the biblical text ... Like the biblical text, archaeology also suffers from many shortcomings, and this is particularly true regarding periods of decline and in connection with sites—in particular highland sites—inhabited uninterruptedly for hundreds of years. Hence, no a priori decision should be made about the precedence of either the archaeological or the textual evidence. Rather, the two sets of data should

1. See Bolen's excellent treatment of the various drawbacks to the “Low Chronology” (2013, 72–109).

be examined, each in its own right, and only then compared one against or along with the other (2013, 248).

A Survey of Iron Age IIA Judah and Its Immediate Vicinity

In what follows, I will catalog the excavated sites where Iron Age IIA remains have been uncovered. The area for my survey will be limited to the territory typically identified with ancient Judah and its immediate vicinity. This includes the main excavated sites of the Central Benjamin Plateau² and the Judean Shephelah, Negev, and Aravah.³ I have only dealt with excavated sites that have produced a preliminary (e.g., NEAEHL) or final report of their excavations. See Table 5–1 below for a list and synopsis of the sites to be discussed.

Except for the area surrounding Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh), I have not discussed surveyed sites, because the differentiation between the various phases of the Iron II is difficult to determine from archaeological survey (Aharoni and Amiran 1955; Dagan 1992; Shavit 2000, 189–230; 2003; McKinny and Dagan 2013). Moreover, even if archaeological surveys can show the existence of Iron Age IIA occupation that still does not provide evidence of the nature or ethnic affiliation of that occupation. Questions concerning fortification, national affiliation and destruction are precisely the reason for this section, unfortunately, archaeological survey cannot answer these questions (Uziel and Shai 2010; Uziel and Maeir 2005).

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2. I have excluded the southern hill country sites (e.g., Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, etc.) from the survey due to the lack of excavated material from the Iron IIA. Jerusalem is a separate category altogether, and the debate continues regarding the evidence for it being the capital of a territorial state (E. Mazar 2011; E. Mazar 2009; E. Mazar 2007; A. Mazar 2010; A. Mazar 2006; Faust 2010; Finkelstein, Koch, and Lipschits 2011; Finkelstein 2011). Other sites such as the list of fortified settlements associated with Rehobam in 2 Chronicles 11:5–12 (Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-Zur, Ziph, and Hebron) have either never been excavated or only partially excavated (but see below for discussion).
 3. For a similar treatment in the Shephelah see Shai's treatment of the Shephelah from the Shishak invasion (925 BCE) until the Iron IIB (c. 800 BCE) (Shai 2000) and Koch's recent assessment of the region from the Iron I-II (Koch 2012, 45–64).

Table 5-1 Iron IIA Excavated Archaeological Sites in Judah and Its Immediate Vicinity.

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh)	Benjamin	Stratum 3B (Iron IIA early 9 th century BCE fortified site, destroyed in 6 th century BCE ending stratum 3A)	Judah	(Zorn 1993a; 1993b; 1997; 2013)
Khirbet ed-Dawwara (Michmash?)	Benjamin	Iron I/IIA occupation level, abandoned c. 900 BCE	Judah? Israel? Philistine?	(Finkelstein 1990; 1993; Na'aman 2012a, 1–9)
Moza	Benjamin	Stratum VI (Iron IIA 9 th century BCE)	Judah	(Greenhut and De Groot 2009; Greenhut 2012; Kisilevitz and Eirich-Rose 2013)
Gezer	Shephelah	Tandy Preliminary stratum 7/HUC VIB (Iron IIA 9 th century destruction)	Philistia? Israel? Judah?	(Ortiz and Wolff 2012; Dever 1993a)
Tel Hamid (Ras Abu Hamid)	Shephelah	Stratum VII (9 th century BCE destruction)	Philistia	(Wolff and Shavit 2008)
Tel Mique/Ekron	Shephelah	Stratum III (2 nd quarter of 10 th –9 th century BCE)	Philistia	(T. Dothan and Gitin 2008; T. Dothan and Gitin 1993)
Timnah (Tel Batash)	Shephelah	Occupational Gap in 9 th century BCE—Stratum IV (10 th century BCE), Stratum III (8 th century BCE, destruction 701 BCE)	Abandoned	(A. Mazar, Kelm, and Panitz-Cohen 2001; A. Mazar 1997b; A. Mazar and Kelm 1993)
Beth-shemesh	Shephelah	Level III (Iron IIA 950–790 destruction)	United Kingdom-Judah	(Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008; Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Manor 2009)

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Tell es-Safi/ Gath	Shephelah	Stratum A3 (Iron IIA, late 9 th century BCE destruction)	Philistia	(Maeir 2012, 25–49; Shai and Maeir 2012)
Tel Harasim	Shephelah	Stratum IV (900–810 BCE destruction) ⁴	Judah	(Givon 2008, 1766–67)
Azekah	Shephelah	Iron IIA (9 th century BCE destruction)	Judah	(Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2012; Stern 1993)
Khirbet Qeiya	Shephelah	Iron I/IIA (abandonment in the early Iron IIA)	Judah (United Kingdom)?, Northern Israel polity?, Canaanite enclave?	(Na'aman 2008a; Garfinkel and Ganor 2009; Garfinkel and Kang 2011; Finkelstein and Fantalkin 2012; Na'aman 2012b)
Jarmuth	Shephelah	No Iron II levels in excavation (Stratum Acr-5–3 Iron I; Stratum Acr-2 Persian-Roman) Iron I-II reported in survey	Abandoned?	(Miroshedji 2008; Dagan 2011)
Tel Erani	Shephelah	Iron Age II (strata XIII–IV, in areas A, E–H, K, R, U) Stratum IX Iron IIA (large plastered surface), Stratum VIII Iron IIA (two 9 th century BCE buildings), Stratum VII Iron IIB (mid-8 th century BCE), Stratum VI Iron IIB (late 8 th century BCE, Neo-Assyrian destruction, LMLK seal impressions, four-room houses)	Philistia? Judah?	(Kempinski and Gilead 1991, 164–191; Yeivin and Kempinski 1993; Brandl 1997, 256–258)

4. The excavations at Tel Harasim have not been fully published, on account of this, specific stratigraphic issues are difficult to assess.

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Tel Zayit (Libnah? Moresbeth- gath?)	Shephelah	Iron IIA (9 th century BCE destruction)	Philistia? Judah?	(Tappy et al. 2006; Tappy 2008; 2011)
Tel Burna (Libnah?)	Shephelah	Iron IIA (9 th century BCE, destruction?)	Judah	(Shai et al. 2012)
Tel Goded	Shephelah	Iron IIA Destruction?	Judah	(Gibson 1994, 223–231)
Mareshah	Shephelah	Iron II Remains (Iron IIB–C remains)	Judah	(Yeivin and Kempinski 1993; Kloner 2008)
Kh. el Qom (Makkedah?)	Shephelah	Iron IIA (9 th century BCE remains)	Judah	(Dever 1993b)
Lachish	Shephelah	Level IV (late 10 th century BCE fortified construc- tion Iron IIA, destruction by earthquake c. 760 BCE)	Judah	(Ussishkin 2004, 76–97; Ussishkin 1993)
Tel ‘Eton (Eglon?)	Shephelah	Stratum B4 Iron IIA (fragmentary level only in one square)	Judah	(Faust 2011)
Tell Beit Mirsim	Shephelah	Stratum B3 (10 th cen- tury BCE)–A1 (9 th century BCE) (Iron IIA—destruction of B3 fortifications, A1–A2 rebuilding and destruction at the end of the 8 th century BCE)	Judah	(Albright and Greenberg 1993; Greenberg 1987; Ben-Arieh 2004)
Khirbet Rabud (Debir?)	Judean Hill Country	Stratum B–III (9 th century BCE)	Judah	(Kochavi 1974; Kochavi 1993c)
Tell el-Hesi	Shephelah	Stratum VIII (early 9 th century BCE fortress destroyed in the late 8 th century BCE)	Judah	(Blakely and Horton 2001; Fargo 1993; Hardin, Rollston, and Blakely 2012)

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Tel Nagila	Shephelah	Stratum IV (late 10 th –9 th cent. BCE)	Judah? Philistia?	(Shai et al. 2011)
Tel Halif (Rimmon?)	Shephelah	Stratum VIB (900–700 BCE, destruction before stratum VIA 700–650 BCE)	Judah	(Seger and Borowski 1993; Borowski 1994; Jacobs 2008; Hardin 2010)
Tel Sera (Ziklag?)	Negev	Stratum VII (destroyed by fire in the 9 th century BCE)	Philistia	(Oren 1982; Oren 1993)
Beersheba	Negev	Iron II City (Strata IX–I) VI (late Iron IIA—temporary work camp), V (Iron IIA mid–9 th century BCE—Administra- tive city [solid wall] destroyed by Hazael [c. 814 BCE]), IV (Iron II mid–late 9 th century BCE— Administrative city [rebuilt] destroyed by earthquake c. 760 BCE), III (Iron IIB 8 th century BCE— Administrative city [casemate wall]), II (Iron IIB late 8 th century BCE— Administrative city [rebuilt] destroyed by Assyrians [701 BCE]), I (Iron IIC early 7 th century BCE—Reconstruc- tion attempt)	Judah	(Herzog 1984; 1993; 2008)

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Tel 'Ira	Negev	Stratum VIII (10 th –9 th century BCE remains beneath stratum VII 8 th century BCE fortress, no destruction of VIII)	Judah	(Beit-Arieh 1993; Beit-Arieh 1999; Freud 1999)
Tel Masos	Negev	Stratum I (Late 11 th –Early 10 th centuries BCE follows Stratum II which was destroyed at the end of the 11 th century BCE)	Amalek? Judah? Edom?	(Kempinski 1993; Fritz and Kempinski 1983)
Arad	Negev	Stratum XII (10 th century BCE destroyed by Shishak) Stratum XI Casemate Fortress (9 th century BCE destroyed by Hazael or earthquake)	Judah	(Herzog 2001; 2002; Herzog et al. 1984; Aharoni 1993a)
Tell Esdar (early Aroer?)	Negev	Stratum III (11 th or 10 th century BCE, destroyed by Amalekites or Shishak?), Stratum II (10 th or 9 th century BCE)	Judah	(Kochavi 1993a; 1969)
Tamar (En Hazeva)	Aravah	Stratum VII (9 th –8 th centuries BCE large casemate fortification, follows smaller VIII fortress from 10 th century BCE, which was destroyed with fire)	Judah	(R. Cohen and Yisrael 1996b; 1996a)

Site	Region	Stratum and Date	Affiliation	Bibliography
Khirbet en-Nahas	Aravah	Fortress Stratum A3 (Iron IIA—10 th –9 th centuries BCE, A3b four-chamber gate structure in mid-10 th –mid-9 th century BCE, A3a gatehouse decommissioned enclosure turned into residence in the 9 th century BCE)	Edom	(Smith and Levy 2008)
Yotvata	Aravah	Early Iron Age Casemate fortress, presence of Edomite pottery from 8 th century BCE and Qurraya Ware	Judah? Edom?	(Meshel 1993; Meshel 1989; Avner 2008)
Timna	Aravah	Rothenberg—Abandonment after the early Iron I, Renewed excavations—majority of activity in 10 th –9 th centuries BCE	Edom	(Rothenberg 1972; Ben-Yosef et al. 2012; Ben-Yosef 2013)
Tell el-Kheilefeh (Elath?)	Aravah	Glueck's Period I (Iron IIA casemate fortress destroyed by Shishak), Period II (reconstruction under Jehoshaphat with solid wall)/ Pratico re-appraisal—earliest occupation = 8 th century BCE	Edom	(Pratico and DiVito 1993; Glueck and Pratico 1993)
Coral Island/ Jezirat Fauran (Etzion-geber?)	Aravah	Iron Age II fortifications beneath Byzantine casemate fortification	Judah?	(Flinder 1977; Rothenberg 1970; Raban 1993)



Figure 5-1 Map 1—Discussed Archaeological Sites in Benjamin, Hill Country, Shephelah and Negev. Map Created by Author with Satellite Bible Atlas Base Map © Bill Schlegel, Used With Permission.

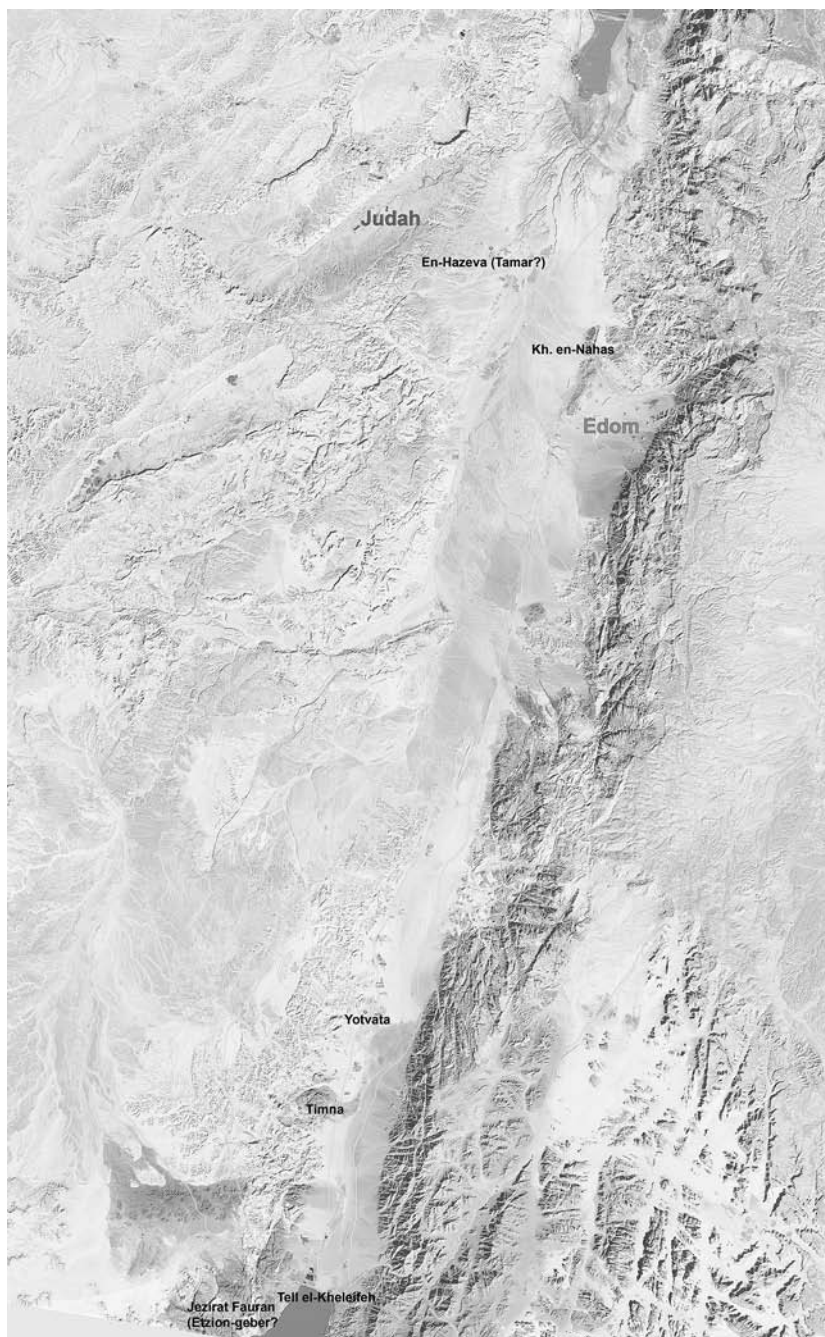


Figure 5-2 Map 2—Discussed Archaeological Sites in Arava. Map Created by Author With Satellite Bible Atlas Base Map © Bill Schlegel, Used With Permission.

Benjamin

Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh)

Tell en-Nasbeh has typically been identified as Mizpah (Zorn 2013) of Benjamin.⁵ William Badè excavated Tell en-Nasbeh from 1926–1935, but his untimely death in 1936 left the publishing of the excavation reports to Badè's students (Zorn 1988). Badè's excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh revealed several Iron II phases (3C,

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5. In a recent article of *BAR*, Y. Magen (Magen 2008) concludes that Nebi Samwil was biblical Mizpah by giving five positive reasons for its identification and four negative reasons against Tell en-Nasbeh's claim to be the "overlook." My counterpoints will be in parentheses beside his points. The positive reasons are as follows: (1) Albright liked the identification of Nebi Samwil even after the excavations of Tell en Nasbeh (Magen's endnotes refer to an article written by Albright in 1923; the excavations at Nasbeh began in 1925); (2) Nebi Samwil matches the geographic order of the Benjamite city list in Joshua 18:25–26 better than Tell en-Nasbeh (the sites are too close to have a clean geographic order—especially when Chepirah [Kh. el-Kefireh] and Mozah [Kh. Beit Mizza] are both due west of the previous location of Gibeon [el Jib], Ramah [er Ram], Beeroth [El Bireh?]). (3) Existence of the Iron II material at Nebi Samwill in fill layers (Magen mysteriously criticizes Zorn (1997) for jumping to conclusions regarding the absence of the Iron I at Nebi Samwill, but in the next sentence admits that Zorn was actually correct.) Additionally, Nasbeh has a much better Iron Age stratigraphic sequence that matches the biblical depiction of Mizpah being an administrative city of some import (see Broshi's archaeological description; 1 Sam. 7:1–16; 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 25:23; 2 Chron. 16:6; Neh. 3:7, 15, 17; Jer. 15:8). More than that, despite the existence of the so-called LMLK seal impressions at Nebi Samwill, Tell en-Nasbeh has a direct connection between a biblical personage and an archaeological artifact, namely the "Jaazaniah seal," which was found in a sixth century BCE tomb at Nasbeh and perfectly matches the name of Jaazaniah from Jer. 40:8 (see Berridge 1992, 593)). (4) Nebi Samwill is 3,000 feet above sea level, a good match for Mizpah, which means "overlook" (the majority of the names in the Central Benjamin Plateau have "high" names like Geba, Gibeah, and Gibeon, which all are derivatives of "hill." Nasbeh may not mean Mizpeh, but it is nevertheless atop a natural hill, which could in fact be an "overlook."). (5) The existence of a Byzantine monastery that was built to commemorate the prophet Samuel and his ministry in Mizpah, and a late tradition related to the Crusaders' treatment of Samuel's bones (beginning of the erroneous tradition that identified the site as the location of Samuel's burial and his hometown Ramah). The negative reasons: (1) Nasbeh does not equal Mizpah linguistically (i.e., no toponymic connection). (2) No unequivocal evidence that proves the identification in Nasbeh's favor (this is true of every site not named Jerusalem, Gezer, Hazor, Meggido, or Lachish). (3) Based on a subjective reading of the biblical sources and adaption with the archaeological finds. (Magen's identification is based on a subjective reading of late biblical sources [Nehemiah] and extra-biblical sources that are well beyond the main period of Mizpah's occupation.) (4) Nasbeh is too far from Jerusalem based on Nehemiah 3:7 and 1 Maccabees 3:46–47 (Nebi Samwill and Tell en-Nasbeh

3B, 3A) within Stratum 3. Stratum 3A relates to the end of the Iron II fortified city and a change in city plan (Stratum 2) that likely relates to Mizpah becoming the Babylonian provincial capital (e.g., 2 Kings 25:23–25). Stratum 3C and Stratum 3B relate to two stages in the fortification of Mizpah. Stratum 3C had a casemate fortification with three- and four-room houses built into the structure with the backroom formed by the casemate section. Stratum 3B has a massive Iron II offset-inset wall (i.e., sawtooth) constructed of loose field stones with an exposed length of 660 m, a thickness c. 4 m, and an elevation of 12–14 m above bedrock. In addition, this wall had eleven towers, one of the largest gate complexes in the country (outer gate with a four-chambered inner gate), a fosse on three sides (except the south), a stone glacis, and a covering of plaster up to 4 m high on the outer face of the wall (Zorn 1993a, 1111; 2013).



Figure 5-3 The “Great Wall” of Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah) Stratum 3B © Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com, Used With Permission.

are just over 6 km apart with absolutely no line of site interference between them. Both of these sites can be considered “opposite” Jerusalem). Perhaps the best reason for Samwill’s exclusion from the Mizpah discussion is that it closely matches the evidence for another biblical site, namely the “high place of Gibeon” (1 Chron. 16:39, 21:29; 2 Chron. 1:3, 13) (Miller and Hayes 2006, 202). Nebi Samwill sits about a kilometer from Gibeon (el-Jib), showing the close connection between Gibeon and Nebi Samwill. Since Gibeon sits in the middle of a plateau with no other viable candidates for a high place (unless of course it is inside the city), it seems imminently reasonable to identify Nebi Samwill as the “high place of Gibeon.” See Zorn’s response for a similar conclusion (2008).

In sum, Stratum 3B represents one of the largest fortifications excavated in Judah. This construction (“the Great Wall”), has typically been related to the building project of King Asa mentioned in 1 Kings 15:22 that would have occurred in the early 9th century BCE (sometime before Baasha’s death 886/885 BCE). Unfortunately, very little ceramic material has been published and much of it was discarded (Zorn 1999, 146–150). This has led to a couple of different proposals that have challenged the dating of this wall (Katz 1998; Finkelstein 2012a). Finkelstein’s recent proposal calls for a construction date in the late 9th or early 8th century BCE during the time of Joash of Judah (836–796 BCE) when Judah was able to expand to the west and south under the domination of Aram in the absence of a dominant Israelite neighbor to the north. He reaches this conclusion on fortification comparisons, each of which are conveniently dated by a holder of the “low chronology,” and a highly conjectural interpretation of Aramean-Judahite interactions in Kings (2012a, 19–28). Katz’s proposal attempts to date the inner wall (Stratum 3C) to the 8th century BCE during the time of Hezekiah and the “Great Wall” (Stratum 3B) to the 6th century BCE Babylonian activity (1998, 131–133). There are no clear chronological markers following the end of Stratum 4 (Iron I with Philistine Bichrome) and its change to a Babylonian provincial capital in Stratum 2. On account of this, it seems best to withhold judgment on the specific dating of Stratum 3C (inner casemate wall) and 3B (“Great Wall”). In any case, even if the fortifications of Stratum 3B relates to a later period (e.g., 8th century BCE) there is no good reason to assume that Stratum 3C’s casemate fortification could not relate to Asa’s building project in 1 Kings 15:22 (Na’aman 2013, 266–267).⁶ In the absence of future excavations, the association of Asa’s building will remain an open question.⁷

Khirbet ed-Dawwara

Khirbet ed-Dawwara (Finkelstein 1993; Finkelstein 1990, 163–208) offers a good parallel to Khirbet Qeiyafa (see below). Both sites have an Iron I/IIA peripheral town plan with four-room houses built into a casemate wall (Finkelstein 2012a, 20–23). Interestingly, both sites are in the vicinity of Philistine and Israelite clashes

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6. The early Iron IIA casemate fortification at Khirbet Qeiyafa would seem to be a clear parallel to the casemate fortification of Stratum 3C (Garfinkel and Ganor 2009; Garfinkel and Kang 2011).
 7. S. Gibson has communicated that his ongoing analysis of Pritchard’s excavations of Gibeon (el-Jib) shows that Pritchard’s “early wall” (Pritchard 1993) should be dated to the 10th century BCE on the basis of the ceramic material (personal communication).

recounted in 1 Samuel (13–14, 17). Each site was abandoned at some point in the 10th century BCE (Finkelstein and Piasezky 2010, 84–88; Garfinkel and Kang 2011, 171–183; Finkelstein 1993, 332–334). Finally, each site was directly on the territorial border with another polity. In the case of Khirbet Qeiyafa, the border was between the Philistines (Gath) and Judah, Israel or some other polity in the early part of the 10th century BCE.⁸ In the case of Khirbet ed-Dawwara, the border was between the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah separated by the Wadi es-Suwenit.

Levin recently argued that Khirbet Qeiyafa should be identified with an Israelite fortified encampment mentioned in 1 Samuel 17 (specifically the *לִגְעָם* 1 Samuel 17:20) (Levin 2012). Similarly, perhaps the small fortified site of Khirbet ed-Dawwara (c. 1 acre)⁹ can be identified with the encampment at Michmash that was attacked by the Philistines in 1 Sam. 13:19; 14:1,6,12,15 (cf. 2 Sam. 23:14 “Philistine garrison in Bethlehem”).

The town of Michmash is mentioned in the following four periods: the 11th century BCE (1 Samuel 13–14), the late 8th century BCE in Isaiah’s description of the coming Assyrian army (Isaiah 10:28),¹⁰ the Persian period in the recounting of 122 Benjaminites return from exile (Ezra 2:27, Neh. 11:31), and the Hasmonean period when Jonathan settled and governed from the site (1 Mac. 9:73). It should be noted that the Arabic town of Muhkmas securely preserves the ancient toponym in the area, so the Iron Age, Persian and Hellenistic town should be sought in close proximity to the Arabic town. Furthermore, the area has a host of small ruins in and around the Arab town (e.g., Tell Maryam (Kallai 1972, site 115; Feldstein, Kidron, Hanin et al. 2013, site 210; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2376), Mukhmas (Kallai 1972, site 109; Feldstein, Kidron, Hanin et al. 2013, site 223; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2304), Khirbet el-Ḥara el-Fauqa (Kallai 1972, site 108; Feldstein, Kidron, Hanin et al. 2013, site 223; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2300), and Khirbet Tell el-’Askar (Kallai 1972, site 105; Feldstein, Kidron, Hanin, et al. 2013, 227; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2253) that have revealed Iron Age, Persian, and Hellenistic remains through archaeological survey. Specifically, Khirbet el-Ḥara el-Fauqa has produced Iron I-II sherds

8. For a summary of the different views on the ethnicity and national affiliations of Khirbet Qeiyafa see Levin’s comments (Levin 2012, 82–84).

9. Khirbet ed-Dawwara means “the ruin of the circle” or the “round one” (Finkelstein 1993, 332; 1990, 163). The name is likely due to the clear circular shape of the ruin formed by the casemate fortification.

10. Aharoni believed that this reflected Sennacherib’s attack against Jerusalem (Aharoni 1979, 393; Rainey and Notley 2006, 241–243).

that have caused some to suggest identifying it with Michmash (Arnold 1992a, 814–815). Khirbet ed-Dawwara is the only site in the immediate vicinity (1 km to the southeast) of Muhkmas that has been excavated. As stated above, Finkelstein’s excavations revealed only late Iron I/early Iron IIA remains. Late Iron Age and Persian remains were found inside the village core and Hellenistic remains were found both in the village and especially at Tell Maryam. These are important points in identifying the town of Michmash throughout its existence.

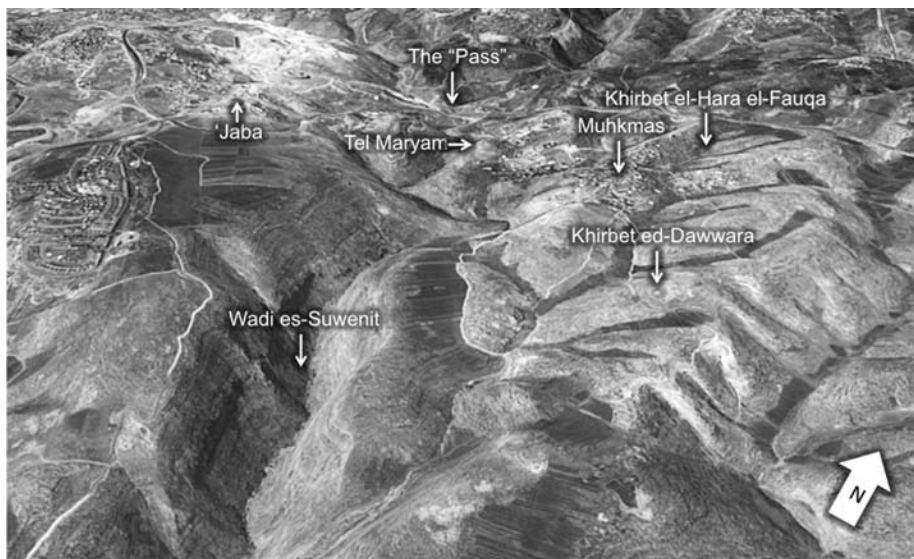


Figure 5-4 Sites Mentioned in Association With Michmash © Google Earth.

It should also be noted that Asa’s fortifications (1 Kings 15:22, cf. 2 Chron. 16:6) of Mizpah¹¹ and Geba (‘Jaba’)¹² effectively established the border between Israel and Judah along the deep canyon of the Wadi es-Suwenit, which traverses the entire Judean wilderness (where it is called the Wadi Qelt) until reaching Israelite Jericho (Arnold 1992a, 814–815). This fortification would have occurred

11. Either the casemate wall of Stratum 3C or the solid wall of 3C (see above).

12. The tell of ‘Jaba is fully covered by the modern Arab town and has never been excavated. Aharoni suggested that if Geba were ever to be excavated it would likely reveal a “high place” similar to the dismantled one (four-horned altar) found at Beersheba (Stratum II) since these sites marked the borders of Judah (2 Kings 23:8) (Aharoni 1979). Geba should be identified with “Gibeath-Elohim” (compare 1 Sam. 13:3 to 1 Sam. 10:15).

sometime before Baasha's death in 887 BCE in either the late 10th century BCE or the early 9th century BCE (Rainey and Notley 2006, 196–197). The longevity of this border can be observed from 2 Kings 23:8, where the typical national holistic term “from Dan to Beersheba” (Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Kings 4:25) was modified to “from Geba to Beersheba” during the days of Josiah (640–609 BCE). If these texts can be relied upon, this would mean that it is probable that the territory on the northern bank of the Wadi es-Suwenit-Wadi Qelt would have likely been abandoned after a clear, geographical border had been established. When this is taken into account, the settlement pattern of the sites around Muhkmas can be hypothetically reconstructed according to their textual and archaeological witness.

In the early Iron Age, Khirbet ed-Dawwara should be identified with either Michmash or a fortified satellite of late Iron I/early Iron IIA Michmash (1 Samuel 13–14) that may be associated with the Philistine garrison that Jonathan attacked (1 Samuel 14:4–15).¹³ The deep, rocky crags of the Wadi es-Suwenit provide a clear geographical backdrop to the account of Jonathan's daring caper,¹⁴ which is clear to anyone who visits the area (Rainey and Notley 2006, 146). Interestingly, Khirbet ed-Dawwara sits considerably closer to the most precipitous section of the canyon of the Wadi es-Suwenit (1 km) than either the Arabic town (1.6 km) or Khirbet el-Hara el-Fauqa (2 km). This fortified settlement was likely abandoned after the border establishment under Asa since it would have fallen into “no man's land” between Israelite Bethel and Judahite Mizpah. The later Iron II and Persian village of Isaiah 10:28 and Nehemiah 11:31, Ezra 2:27 should be located inside the Arab town or perhaps at Khirbet el-Hara el-Fauqa where these periods were observed during surveys. Finally, Jonathan's residence should be located at Tell Maryam (.9 km northeast of Mukhmas) where the remains of a building of header-stretcher masonry were observed (Kallai 1972, site 115; Feldstein, Kidron, Nitzan et al. 2013, site 210; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2376; A. Mazar, Amit, and Ilan 1984, 237). In sum, an analysis of the archaeological occupation of the sites around Muhkmas and the textual record of the toponym illustrate the

13. Finkelstein discusses these possibilities in the report (Finkelstein 1990, 201–203).

14. Of course this in itself does not prove that the event happened according to the biblical description, however, it clearly shows that the writer of Samuel had a detailed knowledge of the topography of the area (Levin 2012, 83–86). Wyatt offers a good analysis of the event and the identification of the cliffs (Wyatt 1995, 62–69).

complexities involved in site identification when a toponym has been used across various time periods.¹⁵

With regards to the topic at hand, I would suggest that the abandonment of Khirbet ed-Dawwara at the very beginning of the 9th century BCE was due to the establishment of the border between Judah and Israel. Note especially the red-slipped burnished bowls and kraters (type 2 and 4, which only make up 1.7% of the total assemblage) and (Finkelstein 1990, 180).¹⁶ Finkelstein initially dated Khirbet ed-Dawwara's end to c. 900 BCE, and he continues to maintain this date (1990, 195–196; 2012a, 18–19; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2006, 50–58). He and Piasetzky suggested that the abandonment of Khirbet ed-Dawwara, Khirbet et-Tell (Ai?), Khirbet Raddana, and possibly Gibeon was a residual affect of Shishak's campaign in 925 BCE.¹⁷ However, they recognize that Khirbet ed-Dawwara “may have been deserted a bit later” (2006, 58). Similarly, the surveyed site of nearby Khirbet Tell el-'Askar appears to have been abandoned at the same time (Finkelstein 1990, 203).¹⁸ If this dating is sustainable, could this slightly later abandonment be related to a slightly later event in the historical timeline? Namely, Asa's Mizpah and Geba wall fortification and border establishment that would have occurred c. 30 years (c. 895 BCE) after Shishak's invasion.¹⁹ Certainty on the matter cannot be reached, but the combination of historical circumstance and archaeological sequencing is intriguing.

15. Finkelstein tentatively concluded that the site may be identified with one of the “Gilgals” (e.g., 1 Sam. 11:14) (1990, 203–205).

16. The zoomorphic vessel (Type 25) is interesting and could theoretically be associated with the Philistines, however, there is no other evidence related to the Philistines. Although there appears to be sufficient evidence to allow for a Philistine incursion into the hill country at the sites of Bethel, Tell en-Nasbeh and Beth-Zur (1 Sam. 7:7, 13–14, 10:5, 13:3) (T. Dothan 1982, 44, 48, 54; Finkelstein 1990, 202). On the basis of this zoomorphic vessel, Na'aman has recently suggested that Khirbet ed-Dawwara was a Philistine site (2012a, 1–9).

17. See Faust's analysis of these sites in relation to the formation of the Israelite monarchy (2012, 153–160).

18. Although this site was not excavated only surveyed (Greenberg and Keinan 2009).

19. Gibeon is the westernmost city in Benjamin that is mentioned in the Shishak city list (Rainey and Notley 2006, 176, 180).

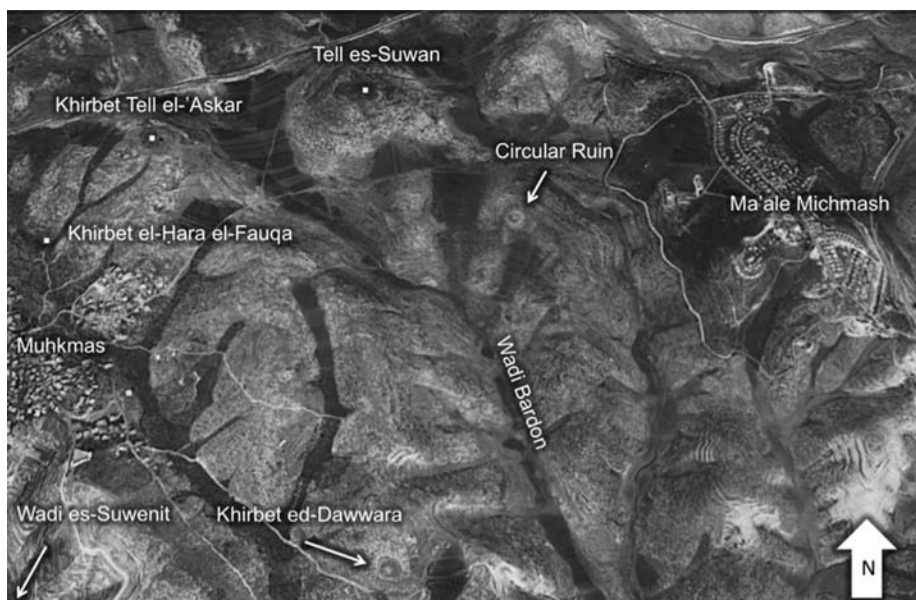


Figure 5-5 Sites Between Muhkmas and Ma'ale Michmas © Google Earth.

Interestingly, Khirbet Tell el-'Askar sits on a slight rise on the western side of the Wadi Bardon (an upper tributary of the Wadi es-Suwnit [the Nahal Michmash]), whereas Khirbet ed-Dawwara is also on a ridge on the western side of the Wadi Bardon before it turns eastward and connects with the Wadi Makkuk. This latter wadi is typically identified with the “Valley of Zeboim” or the “Way of the Wilderness” a route mentioned in 1 Samuel 13:18, Joshua 8:15, and Judges 20:42.²⁰ Could these two ruins mark the route between “the Pass” (1 Sam. 13:23; Isa. 10:29) and the Valley of Zeboim/Way of the Wilderness routes? If Khirbet Tell el-'Askar's occupational history matches that of Khirbet ed-Dawwara (Kallai 1972, site 105; Feldstein, Kidron, Hanin, et al. 2013, 227; Greenberg and Keinan 2009, site 2253), as the survey of the site would seem to indicate, then it could be that these sites were abandoned c. 900 BCE due to their immediate proximity to the Judahite/Israelite border. A short excavation of Khirbet Tell el-'Askar might help answer this question.

20. Wadi Abu Diba (Arabic “Valley of the Father of Hyenas”) likely retains the toponym (Arnold 1992c, 1056; Rainey and Notley 2006, 146).

Moza

The Iron Age II site of biblical Moza (Mullins 1992) sits right in the path of the ongoing expansion of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road (highway 1) right below the modern town of Mevasseret-Zion. In the course of salvage excavations to build the road on the slopes of Moza, the excavators encountered a unique Judahite temple with fantastic cultic finds that seems to date to the late Iron IIA. Some of the figurines and other cultic paraphernalia show a striking similarity to cultic finds from Philistia (Kisilevitz 2013, 38–46; Maeir and Shai 2005). Stratum VII represents the first phase of the Iron II, which the earlier excavators (Greenhut and De Groot) dated to the 10th century BCE on the basis of a fiery destruction that they relate to Shishak's campaign (925 BCE, cf. 1 Kings 14:25). Stratum VI is the continuation of the Iron IIA habitation at the site in the 9th century BCE, which continued largely uninterrupted (Greenhut and De Groot 2009). In the Iron IIB, the temple was renovated and the cultic material was buried in Stratum V in the 8th century BCE (perhaps by Hezekiah) (Greenhut and De Groot 2009; Greenhut 2012; Kisilevitz and Eirich-Rose 2013; Kisilevitz 2013). Specifically, the altar and five standing stones (*masseboth*) at the entrance of the temple were purposefully buried and the purpose of the building was changed during the Iron IIB.

Could Moza's temple be an example of the ubiquitous statement of "the high places (that) were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places" (e.g., 1 Kings 22:43, cf. 15:14)? The writer of Kings indicates that these high places persisted until the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1–4, 22) who removed them. Previously, archaeologists have sought to show Hezekiah's (or Josiah's) cult reformation at the sites of Arad and Beersheba (see below), perhaps the Moza temple is another example of this cult reformation. Similarly, its existence during the 10–9th centuries BCE provides an important touchstone for the cultic descriptions of the various Judahite monarchs until Hezekiah.

It should be noted that Moza Strata V and IV (Iron IIB-Iron IIC) show evidence of large grain storage in the form of silos and a public storage building (building 150) (Greenhut and De Groot 2009; Greenhut 2012). In light of this, it is worth mentioning that the ancient site sits directly on the ancient route from Kiriath-jearim to the Central Benjamin Plateau. Interestingly, the narrative that discusses David's moving of the Ark of the Covenants from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6) indicates that David stopped the procession "at the threshing floor of

21. Recently, a survey in Abu Ghosh (near Kiriath-Jearim) revealed an ancient threshing floor on the hill opposite Kiriath-Jearim to the north, although the survey report does not indicate a specific period (Greenwald and Barda 2012).

Nacon”²¹ after Uzzah touched the ark and placed it in the house of “Obed-edom the Gittite” who was blessed due to its presence (6:7–11). Could there be a connection between the Iron IIA temple (Stratum V) and this narrative? Could there be a Philistine-Judahite cultic connection at the site, similar to the one suggested at nearby Kiriath-jearim by Byrne (2002, 1–24)? Ultimately, it is impossible to say, but the parallels between grain abundance, geographical setting and archaeological sequencing are compelling. In any case, it appears that Moza Stratum VI is a clear example of a 9th century BCE cult context that may be related to ongoing Judahite cult activity outside the Jerusalem temple.

Shephelah

Gezer

Gezer is one of the most significant sites in the region as it offers one of the most complete stratigraphic sequences in the southern Levant (Dever 1993a). Its geographical significance is related to its geographical positioning at the junction of International Coastal Highway and Aijalon Valley route that leads the Beth-horon and Kiriath-jearim ridge routes.²² Recently, the dating of the so-called “Solomonic Fortifications” (i.e., HUC Strata VIIA-VIIB and Tandy preliminary Stratum 8) has been debated (Finkelstein 2002b; Dever 2003; Hardin and Seger 2006). This debate is beyond our scope; however, the existence of a later Iron Age IIA phase (Tandy Stratum 7) that follows the destruction of the earlier Iron IIA phase (Stratum 8) likely demonstrates the consistency of the traditional chronology.²³ Stratum 7 (domestic Units A-C) is associated with the 9th century BCE that continues to use Stratum 8’s fortifications, but the character of the area exposed seems to be less administrative and more domestic. This layer underwent a fiery destruction at the end of the 9th century BCE, which the excavators attributed to Aramean activity (Ortiz and Wolff 2012, 18). Stratum 6 (8th century BCE/Iron IIB) returns this area to its administrative function (Buildings A-C) (Ortiz and Wolff 2012, 14–15). The revised sequence of the Tandy Expedition under Ortiz offers one of the more significant sites for the sub-phasing of the Iron Age II. Future work

22. Beth-horon ridge (Josh. 10:10; 1 Samuel 13:18; 1 Kings 9:17; 2 Chron. 8:5) and Kiriath-jearim ridge route (2 Chron. 13:5–6).

23. Although see Finkelstein, who identifies Omri as the builder of Stratum 8’s fortifications (2013b, 103).

should be done in comparing the material from Gezer Strata 8–7 to Tell es-Safi/Gath A4–A3 (see below) and the as-yet-unpublished material from area D.²⁴

If we accept this stratigraphic sequence, then we must identify the national affiliation of Gezer throughout these three phases. It seems clear from 1 Kings 9:15 that Gezer was an Israelite site during the United Monarchy until the destruction by Shishak (925 BCE). But what happened after this destruction? Did Gezer revert to Philistine control (i.e., Gath)? The Philistines appear to have been in control of the site in the Iron I (Dever 1993a), and the dramatic growth of Iron IIA Gath would make Philistine retrieval a possibility. Were the early monarchs of the northern kingdom of Israel (e.g., Jeroboam and Baasha) able to maintain control of this significant city on the International Coastal Highway? This is also possible, but there appear to have been border conflicts between Jeroboam and Abijah/m (1 Kings 15:7, cf. 2 Chron. 13:1–20) at the end of the 10th century BCE (Rainey and Notley 2006, 171) that may have caused the border city of Gezer to change hands. Furthermore, Nadab and Elah's attacks against Philistine Gibbethon (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15–17) would seem to indicate that they were trying to regain lost territory. Since Gibbethon (Tel Hamid?—see below), sits to the north of Gezer it would seem unlikely that Israel would have needed to attack Gibbethon if it was already in possession of the well-positioned city.²⁵ A third option is that Judah was able to regain its control of this city. If this is the case, then it seems probable that the main purpose of Nadab and Elah's campaigns against Gibbethon was to mitigate Judahite access to the International Coastal Highway via the Ajalon Valley routes. As stated above, Omri's Gibbethon decision likely had the dual effect of creating better relations between the inland Philistine cities of Ekron²⁶ and Gath (cf. 2 Kings 2:16, 16; 8:1–3) and Judah.

The available textual and archaeological evidence is not sufficient for making a definitive conclusion. However, the evidence is clear that Gezer was an important border site between the Philistines and their Israelite/Judahite neighbors throughout the Iron Age II (Ortiz and Wolff 2012, 18; Zukerman and Shai 2006). If I must choose between the three options, then option one (Gezer under Israelite

24. Destruction levels from the late Iron IIA have also been observed at Aphek (Kleiman 2013) and Tel Zeror (Kochavi 1993d).

25. For a different opinion that sees Gezer in Israelite control, see Finkelstein's treatment of this episode (he believes it is a historical event based on the mentioning of the small city of Gibbethon) (2013b, 108–109).

26. The closest Philistine city to Gibbethon, although see below for a discussion of its smaller size in the Iron IIA.

control in the 9th century BCE) would appear to accurately fit the textual and archaeological data.

Tel Hamid (Gittaim/Gath-rimmon? Gibbethon?)

Tel Hamid is the northernmost and westernmost site of our survey (6 km NW of Gezer). Its inclusion is due to the existence of an identified 9th century BCE destruction (Stratum VII) (Shavit 2003; Wolff and Shavit 2008) and the site's possible identification with Philistine Gibbethon (Peterson 1992; Wolff and Shavit 2008) or Gath-rimmon/Gittaim (B. Mazar 1960). Wolff has suggested that this destruction may be related to Hazael's campaign (Wolff and Shavit 2008, 1763). The city of Gibbethon is mentioned in Josh. 19:44; 21:23; 1 Kings 15:27; 16:15, 17, #103 on Thutmose III city list (Rainey and Notley 2006, 72–74) and Sargon II's description against Azuri and Yamani (Rainey and Notley 2006, 236). Currently, the archaeological remains at Hamid are more impressive than Tel Malot (Arabic Tell Malat), the other site commonly identified with Gibbethon. The existence of occupation from the Late Bronze (survey) and substantial remains from the 9th century BCE (Iron IIA) and 8th century BCE (Iron IIB) match quite well with the biblical and extra-biblical corpus.²⁷ Regardless of its identification, Tel Hamid would appear to be within the territory of the Philistines, an entity dominated by Gath and perhaps Ashdod (Faust 2013); perhaps Tel Hamid marks its northwestern border with Israel and Judah.

Tel Mique/Ekron

As one of the great cities of the Philistine Pentapolis, Tel Mique/Ekron enjoyed a long and prestigious history from the Late Bronze Age-Iron IIC (T. Dothan and Gitin 2008). However, Maeir and Uziel have described a “see-saw effect” between Ekron and Gath throughout their histories that demonstrates that each site waxed and waned in conjunction with the rise or fall of its neighbor. This was especially the case, during the Iron IIA following the destruction of Iron Age I Stratum IV (c. 20 hectares) when Ekron became much smaller (c. 4 hectares) until its renaissance in Stratum IIA in which it reached its maximum size (c. 30 hectares) (Maeir and Uziel 2007; Gitin 1998). Conversely, Iron IIA Gath was c. 50 hectares at

27. Although it is not clear if the site was fortified in the Iron IIA, as it was in the Iron IIB (Strata VI and V) (Wolff and Shavit 2008, 1763). Fortifications are obviously a necessary requirement for an identification with Gibbethon if the sieges of Nadab and Elah in the late 10th and early 9th century BCE are to be considered historically reliable.

precisely the period when Ekron was in major decline (Maeir and Uziel 2007, 34, 36). So it appears that Ekron was not a significant political entity during the period in question, which might help explain Ekron's vulnerability expressed in Israelite aggression against Gibbethon (see above).

Tel Batash (Timnah)

The Philistine site of Timna seems to have been abandoned at some point in the 10th century BCE (early Iron IIA—Stratum IV) and not re-inhabited until the Iron IIB (Stratum III). This latter occupational layer may be related to the Judahite western advance during the days of Azariah (cf. 2 Chron. 26:6–7) (Maeir 2012, 49–55; Zukerman and Shai 2006). The underlying immediate physical cause for this decline and abandonment is likely related to the diminished state of Philistine Ekron in the 10–9th century BCE (see above) and the 10th century BCE fortifications at Judahite Beth-shemesh (see below).

Beth-shemesh

The ongoing excavations by Bunimovitz and Lederman have exposed an extensive, well-built Iron IIA city (Level III—950–790 BCE). This layer includes the construction of a large casemate fortification,²⁸ several public buildings, an iron workshop/smithy,²⁹ and an impressive water reservoir system (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008; Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Manor 2009). The excavators have dated the construction of this city to the second half of the 10th century BCE with a continued existence until the beginning of the 8th century BCE (Iron IIB). Obviously, the dating of these fortifications is significant for understanding the state formation of Judah and historical considerations related to the United Kingdom. On account of this, a later date into the mid-late 9th century BCE has been suggested by Finkelstein (2002a), see also Sergi's recent analysis that falls in line with this dating and reconstruction (2013, 227). It should be noted that Bunimovitz and Lederman have also argued for the "seesaw" relationship of historical fortunes between Tel Mique/Ekron and Beth-shemesh (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2006).

28. See Bunimovitz and Lederman's discussion of the relationship of Beth-shemesh to Lachish in the Iron IIA (2011, 33–55). Also see a comparison of these fortifications to Tel Burna's newly exposed Iron IIA fortifications (Shai et al. 2012, 141–157).

29. Dating to the 9th century BCE—this is one of the earliest excavated iron workshops in the country (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008, 1647).

The date of the destruction of level III has been dated by the excavators to 790 BCE on the basis of the Iron IIA pottery assemblage and the record of a battle between Amaziah of Judah and Jehoash of Israel 2 Kings 14:13 (Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Manor 2009). Although this is a possible interpretation, it should be noted that there is no explicit reference to the destruction of Beth-shemesh in the text (compare the “breaking of the wall of Jerusalem”), and it is also possible that this destruction could be related to the “Hazeel Destruction” towards the end of the 9th century BCE. Could the destruction of level III be evidence of Hazeel “setting his face toward Jerusalem” (2 Kings 12:17b)? It is impossible to decide between the two interpretations. This is particularly the case if one holds to a later destruction of Gath around 814 BCE, as opposed to the excavator’s c. 830 BCE (Maeir 2012, Option I; 47–48; Bolen 2013, 248; Rainey and Notley 2006).

Tell es-Safi/Gath and Its Impact on the 9th Century BCE

The archaeological picture from Tell es-Safi/Gath is perhaps the most crucial for understanding the geopolitical climate of the 9th century BCE if for no other reason than the fact that Gath in the 9th century BCE is the largest city in the entire southern Levant (40–50 hectares) (Uziel and Maeir 2005).³⁰ The effect of Tell es-Safi/Gath upon the southern Levantine scene in the Iron IIA is a well-established archaeological reality that has been acknowledged across the breadth of historical and archaeological scholarship.

A critical aspect to this discussion is the limit of the realm of control by Philistine Gath upon the surrounding geopolitical landscape. There seems to be a rising consensus that Gath’s immense size necessitates that it controlled the entire Judean Shephelah (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006, 30–31; Bunimovitz and Lederman 2011, 42–43; Maeir 2012, 26–43; Lehmann and Niemann 2014, 77–94). This may well be the case, however, as Na’aman points out there are other factors for consideration (e.g., the witness of the Books of Samuel and Kings to actual geopolitical realities in the 10–9th centuries BCE), and one does not need to assume that Judah had no presence in the eastern Judean Shephelah during Gath’s supremacy (2013, 263–264). Na’aman also shows that Moab and Edom’s subjugation is noted explicitly through conflict and tribute in the book of Kings (1 Kings 22:47; 2 Kings 8:22a; 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4–6), however, there is no explicit or implicit evidence

30. Significantly, the 2015 season at Tell es-Safi/Gath revealed a massive c. 6 m-wide wall and gate complex has been located in Area D (lower city) (Aren Maeir personal communication).

pointing to the subjugation of Judah by the Omrides. Moreover, the revolt of Libnah under Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram (2 Kings 8:22b, cf. 2 Chron. 21:10b), only provides tangential evidence in support of hostile Philistine/Judahite relations (Na'aman 2013, 264). In a conclusion that I am in full agreement with Na'aman states the following,

Details of the history of the Kingdom of Gath in the 9th century BCE and its relations with the Kingdom of Judah are missing. The author of Kings related that two early Israelite kings (Nadab and Elah) besieged the north Philistine town of Gibbethon (1 Kgs 15:27; 16:15). Yet, he did not mention armed struggles that took place in Judah's western front in the 9th century BCE. As the source material available to the author for writing the history of Judah was richer than that of Israel's history (Na'aman 1996: 180–182; 2006: 150–151), the lack of reference to Judah's struggle with the Philistines might be significant. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I suggest that throughout the late 10th–9th centuries BCE, peaceful relations existed between Judah and Gath. It is thus possible that from the late 10th–early 9th century BCE onward, the kings of Judah could have gradually expanded their territory westward while conducting peaceful relations with Gath. The fortification of Lachish, probably in the mid-9th century BCE, might have resulted from an agreement between the two kingdoms (Na'aman 2010c: 516–517). Thus, on the eve of Hazael's campaign against Gath in approximately 830 BCE, at least part of the easternmost Shephelah district was Judahite, with the fortified city of Lachish serving as its administrative centre (2013, 264).

It should be noted that this position is at odds with a general trend for scholars to hold to Judahite weakness in light of Gath and in particular Omride geopolitical might (Sergi 2012; 2013, 226–246; Finkelstein 2013b; Miller and Hayes 2006, 304, 316, 320–321; Ben-Zvi 2007, 45). However, the fact remains that there is a total absence of textual and archaeological evidence for conflict between both Israel and Judah during the time of the Omrides and Judah and Gath during the 9th century BCE (with the possible exception of Jehoram mentioned above). In light of this, there needs to be a re-assessment of the general belief of Judah's vassal status to the Omrides.

Despite the above assertion that the kingdom of Judah was in basic equality of Judah during the contemporary reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahab, it would seem clear that it is very difficult to determine the exactness of this equality. Each political unit must be judged on its own terms within its own natural expansion zones and in relation to its neighboring polities. To use a boxing analogy, one might ask if Jehoshaphat's Judah was a "pound-for-pound" equal to Ahab's northern kingdom. Perhaps not, Omride Israel was obviously better geographically positioned (Sergi 2013, 234, 240). Yet, it is difficult to speak of historical reconstruction within the confines of such oft-used comparisons. A compelling case can be made that a

symbiotic relationship between Omride Israel and Jehoshaphat-Ahaziah's Judah benefited both parties due to their own respective territorial advances.

Tel Harasim

The historical identity of this site has been debated with various theories being offered regarding its site name (e.g., Moresheth-Gath (Levin 2002, 28–36), Libnah and Eltekeh (Givon 2008, 1766)). The material culture at the site is rich, and it offers a great point of comparison to nearby Tell es-Safi/Gath (4.5 km to the southwest) and Tel Migne-Ekron (5 km to the north). The site was excavated for eleven years between 1990–2000 but was never fully published (Givon 2008, 1766). In light of the above discussion regarding stratum A3 at Tell es-Safi/Gath, it seems all but certain that Tel Harasim was a “daughter site” of Philistine Gath in the 9th century BCE and beyond. This makes the evidence of a late Iron Age IIA (i.e., 9th century BCE) casemate wall significant for reconstructing the political sphere of Gath's influence in the western Shephelah. Like nearby Gath, this first phase of Stratum IV was destroyed with an intense fire that was dated to between 900–810 BCE through C14 analysis (Givon 2008, 1767). Hopefully, future excavations or treatments of the already excavated material will provide insights into the specific settlement process of Tel Harasim in the Iron IIA.

Azekah

The renewed excavations of Azekah under the direction of Lipschits and Gadot began in 2012. Now after two intense seasons of work, the Azekah team has extensive occupational levels from a host of archaeological periods. The significance of Azekah in the Iron IIB and Iron IIC has been made clear by its mention in both the biblical (e.g., Jeremiah 34:7) and extra-biblical sources (“The Azekah Inscription” COS 2.119D, Lachish Letter 4 COS 3.42C). After the first couple of seasons of excavation, surprisingly not much Iron Age II remains have been uncovered. However, there appears to be an Iron Age IIA destruction of the same horizon as the “Hazael Destruction” of A3 at Tell es-Safi/Gath. Future excavations will hopefully provide more clarification, but as of now the pottery assemblage (e.g., hand-burnished pottery of the Iron IIA) of the destructions at Azekah and Tell es-Safi/Gath has a striking resemblance.

It should be noted that there were multiple geo-political factors in the 9th century BCE that could contribute to a “destruction layer.” Hazael's campaigns (e.g., 2 Kings 12:17) undoubtedly made a huge, lasting impact as has been argued extensively for in the literature (Maeir 2004; Maeir 2012; Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Bolen 2013); however, we should not discount the possibility that there

were other factors involved. For example there is textual evidence that points to hostile Philistine/Israelite relations (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15) before the Omrides rose to power.

Khirbet Qeiyafa

The recently concluded excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa (2012) have revealed one of the more intriguing ancient sites in the Iron Age IIA. However, the site and its excavators' interpretations (Garfinkel and Kang 2011) and critics' responses (Finkelstein and Piasezky 2010; Finkelstein and Fantalkin 2012; Levin 2012) are too early (Iron I/early Iron IIA) for our discussion.

Jarmuth

Interestingly, the excavations at Jarmuth (Khirbet el Yarmuk) produced very few Iron II remains (Miroschedji 2008). Miroschedji believes that the Iron Age II site may be found elsewhere. Although it should be noted that the biblical text only mentions the site in (theoretically) Late Bronze and Persian contexts (Josh. 10:3, 5, 23; 12:11; 15:35; 21:29; Neh. 11:29), both of which are present at the site (Acr-6—LB, Acr-2—Persian-Early Roman) (2008, 1797). On the other hand, Dagan's survey revealed Iron Age pottery at the site (Dagan 2011, 256–258). Given this evidence and the probable association with the Maroth of Micah 1:12 as Jarmuth (Levin 2007), it seems best to conclude that Jarmuth was actually inhabited in the Iron Age II. While the nature of this settlement in the Iron Age remains unknown, it would seem that any settlement here would have fallen within the territory of Judah, as the site is situated south and east of Beth-shemesh.

Tel Erani

It was originally believed that there was an occupational gap at Tel Erani in the Iron IIA between a small occupation in the Iron I (squatter settlement) and several Iron IIB-C strata (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993, 417–421). However, Brandl's re-assessment of the stratigraphy shows continuous occupation at the site throughout the Iron II, including two strata from the Iron IIA (IX and VIII) (1997, 256–258). These strata, while not very well preserved, consist of a large plastered surface ("piazza") inside the fortifications (Stratum IX) and two 9th century BCE buildings "with inner courtyards" built over this piazza (Brandl 1997, 257). The excavators and others have identified this settlement with Judahite activity (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993; Hardin, Rollston, and Blakely 2012; Blakely, Hardin, and Master 2014, 33–52), particularly in relation to the Iron IIB levels and the evidence of

twenty LMLK seal impressions and the Neo-Assyrian destruction of Stratum VI (Brandl 1997, 257). However, a few Late Philistine Decorated Ware sherds were found which show the site's close relationship to Philistine territory during the Iron IIA (Brandl 1997, 257). Like Tel Zayit and Tel Nagila below, the evidence from the Iron IIA at Tel Erani is unclear with regards to identifying the builders and inhabitants of the city in the 9th century BCE.

Tel Zayit

Similarly, the ongoing excavations at Tel Zayit (Tappy) have revealed a couple of Iron IIA destructions similar to the above-mentioned sites. Tappy attributes the first destruction to Shishak (925 BCE) and the second destruction to Aramean activity in the mid-late 9th century BCE (2008, 2082; 2011, 139*). Tappy also suggests Libnah and Ziklag as a possible identification for Tel Zayit (2008, 2083). Tel Sera seems to be a better candidate for Ziklag due to its closer proximity to the Nahal Besor (cf. 1 Samuel 30). Likewise, the remains from Tel Burna (see below) offer a more compelling case for the site of Libnah, due to the existence of an Iron IIC level (something Tel Zayit currently lacks) that could be associated with Josiah's wife, Hamutal (2 Kings 23:31; 24:18; Jer. 52:1) (Shai et al. 2012; Uziel and Shai 2010; McKinny and Dagan 2013).

Similarly, Sennacherib's attack on Libnah (2 Kings 19:6; Isaiah 37:6) likely indicates that the site was fortified. Tel Burna has impressive casemate fortifications that were seemingly destroyed in the Iron IIB; as of yet, Tel Zayit does not have any fortifications. This last point is significant for our discussion in that it might help delineate the territories of 9th century BCE Judah and Philistia through their border sites (cf. 2 Kings 8:22b). If Tel Burna is Libnah then its position in the midst of the Nahal Guvrin just west of the Azekah-Goded range marks the fortified western border of Judah in the late Iron IIA (but see below). It appears that Tel Zayit was directly on the border between Philistine Gath and Judah in the 9th century BCE and may have been a Philistine site in the late Iron IIA (Finkelstein, Sass, and Singer-Avitz 2008).

Tel Burna (Libnah?)

The recent excavations carried out at Tel Burna have unearthed a section of an Iron IIA casemate fortification that seems to have been in use from the 9th century BCE until its destruction at the end of the 8th century BCE by Sennacherib (Shai et al. 2012, 141–157). The date of the original construction of these fortifications is still unclear, as the foundation of the wall has yet to be reached. However, there is clear surface occupation both inside and outside of the eastern

casemate wall that is dateable to the 9th century BCE, which establishes the *terminus ante quem* for the c. 70 × 70 m casemate fortification (Shai et al. 2012, 145–147).



Figure 5-6 Casemate Fortification (NE Corner of Tell) at Tel Burna With 9th Century BCE Levels (Shai et al. 2012).

The pottery from these surfaces is quite similar to Stratum A3 from nearby Tell es-Safi/Gath (Shai and Maeir 2012, 313–363). It is unclear if there is a destruction level at Tel Burna that can be related to the “Hazeal Destruction” noticed at Tell es-Safi/Gath and other sites (see above and below). Hopefully, future excavations of this 9th century BCE level will provide additional insight into the date of the construction of this fortification and whether or not the Iron IIA level suffered from destruction.

Mareshah

Iron Age II remains were uncovered in Bliss and Macalister’s 1900 excavation, but only in a small sounding beneath the Hellenistic city’s northwestern tower (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993, 949–950). These remains, the classical tell shape, the surrounding Iron II Judahite fortifications at nearby sites (e.g., Lachish), and the preponderance of the site’s occurrence in biblical literature (Josh. 15:44; 1 Chron. 2:42; 4:21; 2 Chron. 11:8; 14:9–10; 20:37; Micah 1:15) are suggestive that the site was at least inhabited, if not fortified in the Iron IIA.³¹ There is no textual

31. The presence of seventeen LMLK seal impressions from Bliss and Macalister’s sounding indicates that the site had a substantial presence in the Iron IIB.

or archaeological indication that the site had Canaanite habitation (i.e., Bronze Age remains). Mareshah is mentioned twice in texts that are meant to portray Iron IIA realities, Rehoboam's fortifications (2 Chron. 11:8) before Shishak's invasion (Finkelstein 2012b; Rainey and Notley 2006, 169) and Asa's defeat of "Zerah the Cushite" (2 Chron. 14:9–13). Hopefully, future investigations will be able to expose and clarify the Iron II levels of Mareshah.

Khirbet el-Qom (Makkedah?)

Khirbet el-Qom has been commonly identified with biblical Makkedah (Joshua 10:10, 16–17, 21, 28–29; 12:16; 15:41) (Dorsey 1980; Rainey 1980, 194–202).³² The site was excavated for two brief seasons in 1967 by Dever and again in 1971 by Holladay, Strange and Geraty. Both Holladay and Dever note the existence of Iron IIA pottery including "a good collection of 9th-century BCE pottery, including red slipped, hand-burnished and Cypro-Phoenician ("Ashdod") wares" (1992, 98; 1993b, 1234). Holladay's excavations revealed a "late 10th/early 9th" strongly fortified site with the foundations of a gate dating to the Iron IIA (Dever 1993b, 1234). This fortification may be an example of a Judahite fortification during the days of Asa or Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 14:6; 17:2, 19; 19:5; 21:3).

Lachish

The Iron Age II strata at Lachish (Levels V–II) are some of the most well-studied and discussed occupational levels of the Iron Age II (Ussishkin 2004, 76–97). The traditional interpretation of the stratigraphy is as follows:

- Level V—c. 1000–925 BCE, an unfortified site that was destroyed with fire by Shishak. This layer included a "cult-room" (i.e., "Sanctuary 49") near the Persian "Solar Shrine" (Level I) that had a stone altar, four incense stands, and several chalices (Zukerman 2012; Ussishkin 1993, 905). The unfortified state of Level V would appear to be at odds with 2 Chronicles 11:5–12,³³

32. The absence of any Late Bronze Age material remains a problem for the identification with Makkedah, however, the site was only briefly excavated (Holladay 1992).

33. The Chronicler's list of fortified sites, which is not found in Kings, has been the source of great significant debate ranging from partial acceptance as a 10th century source (Rainey and Notley 2006, 169–170; Garfinkel 1988) to a reflection of the time of Hezekiah (8th century BCE) (Maier 2012, 54–56; Na'aman 1986; Na'aman 1988), to a product of the Hasmonean period (Finkelstein 2012b). Of the sites included in the list only Beth-Zur (Funk 1993), Gath (Maier 2012) or Moresheth-gath (Gibson 1994), Mareshah (Kloner 2008; AviYonah

however, Ussishkin and Tufnell suggest the possibility that Rehoboam's fortification may apply to fortified Palace A (Ussishkin 1993, 906; 2004, 76–78).

- Level IV—late 10th or early 9th century BCE, 6 m thick mudbrick wall atop a stone foundation, with an outer revetment wall. Other constructions include: the large gate complex (double gatehouse with interior four-chambered gate) and Palace B with its auxiliary “pillared buildings” (either stables or storehouses). No domestic houses were uncovered in this level. These structures suffered from a destruction that appears to be related to seismic activity (cf. Amos 1:1, Zech. 14:5) sometime around 760 BCE (Ussishkin 1993, 906; 2004, 78–83).
- Level III—8th century BCE, the city-gate and the enclosure wall were rebuilt directly over Level IV foundations. The area of the palatial podium underwent several changes including the addition of palace (C) to the podium along with two more pillared buildings and a courtyard enclosed by a wall. Unlike Level IV, Level III has an abundance of houses, which the excavators interpreted as a population increase. This stratum suffered a fiery destruction as made evident by the presence of a siege ramp, hundreds of arrowheads, and a thick ash layer that covered the entire mound (Ussishkin 1993, 907; 2004, 83–90).

There is universal agreement that the destruction of Level III corresponds with the destruction of Sennacherib, as reflected in the sources (2 Kings 18:14, 17; 19:8; 2 Chron. 32:9; Isa. 36:2; 37:8; Mic. 1:13, Nineveh Lachish Reliefs). However, the dating of the initial construction of the fortifications of Level IV has been heavily debated (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 2013b, 126; Sergi 2013, 226–229; Ussishkin 2004, 76–83; Bunimovitz and Lederman 2011). The debate

and Kloner 1993), Lachish (Ussishkin 2004; Ussishkin 1993), Azekah (Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2012; Stern 1993) and Hebron (Tell Rumeida) (Ofer 1993a; Chadwick 1992) have been excavated. Of these, only Hebron (existence of hand-burnished red-slipped pottery (Chadwick personal communication)), Gath (Tell es-Safi) and Lachish have reached levels that could relate to the early Iron IIA but these are not without their own problems (see above). The renewed excavations at Hebron, Azekah and Lachish will hopefully shed more light on this issue.

34. Ussishkin summarizes the problem like this, “among the archaeological data it appears that pottery typology is presently the only available indicator that can be used for dating Level V. It, however, is not conclusive. It is characterized by the red-slipped, irregularly burnished wares that appear in other parts of the Land of Israel, and its dating is an issue not limited to Lachish ... The dating of the pottery assemblage of Level V is also crucial for the debate

over Levels V-IV is at the heart of the low versus high Iron II chronology discussion (Ussishkin 2004, 78).³⁴

On account of this, Garfinkel, Hasel and Klingbeil have renewed the excavations at Lachish (the fourth expedition) in pursuit of better understanding these two levels. They have decided to focus their attention on the northeast section of the tell (2013, 44–51). Since there appears to be no clear chronological anchor between Levels V and IV due to the similarity of hand-burnished red slipped pottery (Zimhoni 2004), one can hope that Garfinkel et al. will be able to obtain C14 samples from secure contexts of levels V and IV. In the absence of this evidence, it would appear unlikely that the issue of Lachish's initial Iron II fortification will reach a resolution.

Tel 'Eton (Eglon?)

The current excavations at Tel 'Eton (2006–present) have revealed several phases of Iron Age II activity at the site, including a massive destruction layer of the Iron IIB strata A4, B3, C2, D2. This destruction has been attributed to Sennacherib's campaign against Hezekiah in 701 BCE (Faust 2011, 204). As of yet, not much from the Iron IIA has been uncovered on the site (Stratum B4), however, there appears to be evidence of occupation in the period in question (Faust 2011; Faust and Katz 2012; Katz and Faust 2014). In any case, the site's inland location in the chalk trough of the Shephelah indicates that it was firmly within the kingdom of Judah in the Iron IIA, regardless of the nature of the settlement during this period.

Tell Beit Mirsim

Tell Beit Mirsim, like Tell el-Hesi below, is one of the foundational excavations for the modern archaeological method. Albright's excavations from 1926–1932 revealed a Bronze-Iron Age site with no later activity after the Babylonian destruction (Iron IIC) of the site. Albright uncovered a series of strata spanning from the Late Bronze Age (Stratum C) to the Iron I (Stratum B) to the Iron II (Stratum A). Albright and Greenberg identified Shishak as the destroyer of the

about the reliability and interpretation of the written sources mentioned above. If Level V dates to the ninth century, as suggested by Zimhoni's pottery analysis, then Rehoboam could not have fortified the site, nor could Shoshenq I's army have destroyed it in his campaign (2004, 78)."

Stratum B fortified town (1993, 179). In describing the Iron II phase, Albright stated the following,

In phase B3 (the first half of the 10th century BCE), a casemate wall was built around the town. The average thickness of the outer wall is 1.55 m, and of the inner wall 1 m, with a distance of 1.5 to 2 m between them. The form and the dimensions of this wall bear a striking resemblance to the casemate walls at Beth-shemesh (stratum IIA³⁵). The wall was repaired and reinforced and was in existence until the end of stratum A. It had two gates: one in the east and one in the west. Judging from the series of successive rebuildings at the west tower, next to the town's west gate, it would appear that there were at least four phases of construction between the 9th and the early sixth centuries BCE—although Delta (the fourth from the top) may go back only to the 8th century BCE. The west tower cannot be earlier than the 9th century BCE because its foundations (to which the west gate is integrally attached) straddle the 10th-century BCE wall. It is likely that phase Delta belongs to the 9th century BCE, that phase Gamma dates from the early seventh, and that phases Beta and Alpha belong to the period of the Babylonian invasion. (Albright and Greenberg 1993, 179–180)

Regarding this sequencing, it seems that Albright's Babylonian destruction should be re-dated to Neo-Assyrian activity in the late 8th century BCE (Albright and Greenberg 1993, 180). However, as recently as the publication of NEAEHL (1993) the fortifications of Stratum B3 have been identified with the United Monarchy (1993, 180; Greenberg 1987). While the rudimentary nature of the excavations makes it impossible to state with certainty, it appears that there was an Iron IIA casemate fortified settlement at Tell Beit Mirsim (Stratum B3 with continuation until Stratum A2, likely the Iron IIB) similar to Level 3 at Beth Shemesh. In light of the wave of late 9th century BCE destructions uncovered at various sites mentioned above, the destruction of Stratum B3 should be re-analyzed to determine if it should be related to the destruction of Shishak (925 BCE) or Hazael (last third of 9th century BCE).³⁶

35. Grant and Wright's Stratum IIA corresponds to Bunimovitz and Lederman's levels 4 at Beth-shemesh, although the casemate walls that Albright refers to are now dated to the current excavator's Level 3 (see above) (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008, 1644).

36. It should be noted that the site's cemetery was surveyed by Braun in the 1970s and 1980s. Pottery from throughout the Iron II (including hand-burnished Iron IIA red slipped pottery) was found in the survey and excavations of the tombs (tomb 101, 4, 5, 6, 1 and 500) (Eliot and Leticia 2005; Ben-Arieh 2004, 78–80, 110–115, 208–210). For different opinions on the end of Stratum A at Tell Beit Mirsim see (Finkelstein and Na'aman 2004, 61–71; Blakely and Hardin 2002, 22–23).

Khirbet Rabud (Debir/Kefar Sephir)

Khirbet Rabud matches all the criteria in the biblical text associated with the city of Debir/Kiriath-Sephir (Josh. 10:3, 38–39; 11:21; 12:13; 13:26; 15:7, 15, 49; 21:15; Judg. 1:11; 1 Chron. 6:58). The ancient site sits on the southern end of the Shephelah about 10 km east of Tel ‘Eton. Interestingly, it is between 20–25 km distance from the surrounding sites of Lachish, Beersheba and Arad, and a mere 10 km south of Hebron. The central location of this site among important Judahite regional and administrative centers suggests that the site may have been of some importance in the heartland of the Judahite state. Kochavi’s short excavations at the end of the 1960s revealed a 9th century BCE wall 4 m thick (in areas A and B) of which 900 meters could be traced (Stratum B-III). This occupational level was found directly above an Iron IIB level (e.g., LMLK seal impressions) that was destroyed at the end of the 8th century BCE (Stratum B-II). Like Khirbet el-Qom above, these Iron IIA fortifications may relate to the period of Asa and Jehoshaphat.

Tell el-Hesi

On account of Petrie’s first expedition in 1890 and subsequent investigations by Bliss (Drower 1990; Gibson and Rajak 1990; King 1990; O’Connell 1990; Toombs 1990) there is no site in the country that is more seminal to the modern archaeological stratigraphic method than Tell el-Hesi. The Joint Expedition (1970–1983) re-opened the site to further clarify stratigraphic issues. Recently, they have opened a new excavation at nearby Khirbet Summeily, a small Iron II site (Judahite?) north of Tell el-Hesi that appears to have had occupation throughout the Iron II and especially in the early Iron IIA (personal communication). At Tell el-Hesi, the expedition exposed a strong “double-wall” fortification from the second half of the Iron IIA (i.e., 9th century BCE). This fortification (Stratum VIII, phases VIIId-a) followed previous Iron IIA occupation that included three tripartite structures (Stratum IX) and ended with a fiery destruction at the end of the 8th century BCE (Stratum VIIId) (Blakely and Horton 2001, 30).

The excavators have interpreted Iron II Tell el-Hesi as a Judahite border site³⁷ that developed from a regional administrative center during the United Monarchy

37. The excavators have previously rejected most of the proposed identifications for Tell el-Hesi (e.g., Ziklag, Lachish, Late Bronze Age Yurza) and have stated that the ancient name is either not attested or unknowable from the available textual material (Blakely and Horton 2001, 31–33). This is certainly possible, although an identification with one of the unidentified sites in Micah 1:2–16 would fit well with the archaeological and textual

(Stratum IX) to a border fortress during the 9th century BCE (Stratum VIII) that was only destroyed in the late 8th century BCE by the Neo-Assyrians (Sennacherib?). Stratum VIII's well-built double wall, similarity to Lachish Level IV, and lack of Philistine remains indicate that the site was Judah's southwestern border with Philistia (Blakely and Horton 2001, 29–31; G. E. Wright 1971). A good point of comparison for determining the affiliation is nearby Tel Sera (Ziklag?), which appears to have textual and archaeological evidence that supports Philistine occupation. If the excavators' interpretation can be accepted then Tell el-Hesi Stratum VIII's fortified settlement may mark Judah's southwestern border on the International Coastal Highway during the 9th century BCE.

Tel Nagila

In the Iron II, Tel Nagila was a small agricultural village or hamlet. Three Iron II strata were determined (Strata IV (Iron IIA), III (Iron IIB), II (Iron IIC)) (Shai et al. 2011, 37–40). Of these three strata, Stratum III was the best developed and may be interpreted as a small temple or shrine. The preceding period, Stratum IV, dates to the time period in question (Shai et al. 2011, 27–33). Shai et al., while acknowledging the difficulties, make a compelling case for the inhabitants of Stratum IV being a “Philistine site in contact with Judah.” If this is the case, it would appear to be at odds with Tell el-Hesi's Stratum VIII fortress association with the southwestern border of Judah (see above). However, ethnic variation is exactly the type of evidence one would expect to find on a border site, particularly a small, unfortified site like Tel Nagila.

Tel Halif

Further inland from Tel Nagila, sits Tel Halif (biblical Rimmon (Borowski 1988)). Tel Halif would appear to be clearly within the territory of Judah. The site has

picture of 8th century BCE Neo-Assyrian destruction in the Shephelah. In particular, the site of Shaphir (רַיפְדָּו) may be suggested as a possible identification due to Eusebius' mentioning of a Σαφεῖρ between Eleutheropolis and Ashkelon (Onom. 156), although this could also apply to Tel Erani (see above) (Rainey and Notley 2006, 243), which likewise has an 8th century BCE destruction (Stratum VI) attributed to a Neo-Assyrian destruction (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993; Blakely and Hardin 2002; Hardin, Rollston, and Blakely 2012). Recently, the excavators have sought to identify the site with “Migdal-Gad” (Josh. 15:37) as being part of “District 3, the Lachish district of Joshua 15:37. They have likewise identified Tel Sheqf with Hadasah and Khirbet Summeily with Zenan (cf. Micah 1:11) from Joshua 15:37–41 (Hardin, Rollston, and Blakely 2012, 34).

undergone extensive excavations that have revealed several Iron II phases (Strata VII, VIB, VIA). According to the excavators, Stratum VIB was built sometime in the early 9th century BCE and was fortified by a “modified casemate-wall system” in conjunction with a glacis, which was built above earlier EB and Iron I walls (Seger and Borowski 1993, 557–558). Stratum VIB ceased after it was destroyed at the end of the 8th century BCE (Iron IIB) by the Assyrians (Seger and Borowski 1993, 558; Hardin 2010). If this dating is correct, there appears to be yet another candidate for a 9th century BCE fortification that can be attributed to the Judahite kingdom.

Negev

Tel Sera (Ziklag?)

Oren excavated Tel Sera in the 1970s. His excavations revealed an Iron Age IIA city (Stratum VII) that developed with no interruption from the earlier Iron I levels (Stratum VI). In particular, Oren noted that the “four-room houses” of Stratum VII were found directly beneath similar structures that contained clear Philistine Iron I material (e.g., Philistine 2 or Bichrome) (Oren 1993, 1332). Apparently Stratum VII was destroyed by fire. There are several issues surrounding the site’s identification and its relationship to the biblical text.³⁸ However, these issues are not relevant to the topic at hand. For our purposes, the site of Tel Sera in the 9th century BCE appears to be inside the territorial unit of Philistia on the southwestern border with Judah. This Philistine stratum appears to have suffered a fiery destruction similar to the destructions that we have witnessed above. Perhaps this destruction was related to Hazael’s campaign.

Tel Sheva

Tel Sheva is one of the most significant Iron Age II sites in the southern part of the country. The site was fortified with a peripheral plan throughout the Iron II (Stratum V–II). Strata VI, V, and IV apparently relate to the late Iron IIA (Herzog

38. The city of Ziklag is only mentioned in the biblical narrative, which seems to place the site along the Nahal Besor on the edges of the Negev and the Shephelah (Josh 15:31; 19:5; 1 Sam 27:6; 30:1, 14, 26; 2 Sam 1:1; 4:10; 1 Chr 4:30; 12:1, 20; Neh 11:28). Tel Sera fits this physical location and there is nothing in the archaeological remains that precludes it from being the biblical site.

and Singer-Avitz 2004, 223–224; Herzog 1984; 2008).³⁹ Stratum V is the first pre-planned settlement at the site and includes a solid wall fortification (3.5–4.2 m thick) built in conjunction with a glacis, a four-chambered gate, and a massive tower that defended the newly constructed water system (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, 223–224; Herzog 2008, 1596). Originally, the destruction of Stratum V was attributed to Shishak (925 BCE),⁴⁰ but the pottery appears to be more in line with the late Iron IIA (e.g., Lachish IV). If this is the case, this might be another example of a site destroyed during the Hazael campaign in the south. Stratum IV was re-built over the partial destruction of Stratum V (raised floors) and was apparently destroyed in an earthquake c. 760 BCE (cf. Amos 1:1).⁴¹

Tel Sheva is clearly within the territory of Judah.⁴² The heavy fortifications of Stratum V in the early-mid 9th century BCE (i.e., the late Iron IIA) likely were built in an attempt to control the Beersheba Valley and the trade connections from the copper activity at Timna and Khirbet en-Nahas (see below) and the Philistine coast (Na'aman 2013). Stratum V also defines the southwestern border of the kingdom of Judah from Philistia. As we have argued above, Tel Sera (Ziklag) was within the territory of Philistia. The fortifications at Tel Sheva (20 km east of Tel Sera) and Tel Halif (Rimmon) effectively demarcate the boundary between Judah and Philistia in the late Iron IIA.

Tel 'Ira

Various site identifications have been offered for Tel 'Ira (Kazbeel [Josh. 15:21], Ramah of the Negev [Josh. 19:8], Eltolad [Josh. 15:30]) (Beith-Arieh 1993). The

39. See the following earlier interpretation of the stratigraphic sequence: Iron II City (Strata IX-I) VII (Iron I late 11th–early 10th century BCE—Enclosed settlement), VI (Iron I/IIA Early 10th century BCE—temporary work camp), V (Iron IIA mid-10th century BCE—Administrative city [solid wall] destroyed by Shishak [925 BCE]), IV (Iron II late 10th–early 9th century BCE—Administrative city [rebuilt]), III (Iron IIA-B 9th–8th century BCE—Administrative city [casemate wall]), II (Iron IIB late 8th century BCE—Administrative city [rebuilt] destroyed by Assyrians [701 BCE]), I (Iron IIC early 7th century BCE—Reconstruction Attempt) (Herzog 1993).

40. It is possible that Beersheba was included in the Shishak list in one of the broken registers, but it is not explicitly referenced.

41. The rebuilding of Beersheba III is contemporaneous with the Iron IIB rebuilding of Lachish III, both of which seem to have been destroyed by Sennacherib in 701 BCE.

42. Josh. 19:2; Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 8:2; 2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 7, 15; 1 Kings 4:25; 19:3; 2 Kings 12:1; 23:8; 1 Chron. 4:28; 21:2; 2 Chron. 19:4; 24:1; 30:5; Neh. 11:27, 30; Amos 5:5; 8:14.

main Iron Age phase at Tel 'Ira relates to Strata VII-VI. These strata are associated with a fortified administrative center of some 6 acres that is surrounded by a wall and dates from the early 7th century BCE–early 6th century BCE (Beith-Arieh 1993, 643–645). It appears that following the destruction of Beersheba Stratum II the administrative center moved eastward onto the southern spur line of the Hebron hills (Herzog 1993).

According to the excavators, there does not appear to be a fortified settlement at Tel 'Ira during the Iron Age IIA, however, some Iron IIA hand-burnished, red-slipped pottery was observed beneath the surfaces of Stratum VII (Beith-Arieh 1993). This earlier Iron IIA layer relates to Stratum VIII. However, Herzog and Singer-Avitz do not discount the possibility that there may have been an earlier Iron IIA (late IAlIA) associated with Stratum VIII (2004, 224, 228–229). In fact, they see Stratum VIII as part of a series of settlements⁴³ in Judah's "state formation" in the late 10th or early 9th century BCE (i.e., the beginning of their late IAlIA) (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, 228–229).

Tel Malhata

The site of Tel Malhata was excavated in the late 1960s by Kochavi (Kochavi 1993b) and in more recent years (until 2000) by Beith-Arieh. During the Iron Age (Kochavi's period C, Beith-Arieh's Strata V–III), Tel Malhata covered an area of 3.7 acres. It appears that the initial Iron Age town (Stratum V) was surrounded by a 4.5 m thick wall that was re-enforced by a stone-faced glacis (Kochavi 1993b; Beith-Arieh 2008). According to Kochavi, the Stratum V city was destroyed at the end of the 10th century BCE (1993b, 935). On the other hand, Beith-Arieh dates Stratum V from the end of the 10th–9th century BCE (2008, 1917).

In the absence of a final report it is difficult to make even preliminary conclusions about the historical significance of Stratum V and its destroyer.⁴⁴ Despite this, the similarity of the style of fortifications of Stratum V to Beersheba stratum V (glacis and solid wall) is compelling. The similar destruction date in the late 9th century BCE is also suggestive of Aramean activity. Perhaps Tel Malhata Stratum V is another example of a late Iron IIA fortified Judahite town that was eventually destroyed in Hazael's campaign. After the destruction of stratum V, Tel Malhata laid unoccupied until the late Iron Age II (Stratum IV) (Beith-Arieh 2008, 1917–1918).

43. Along with Lachish IV, Arad XI, and Beersheba V, see above and below for discussion.

44. For example Tel Malhata is not included in Herzog and Singer-Avitz's survey and dating of Iron IIA sites, despite the inclusion of Beersheba, Tel 'Ira and Arad (2004, 209–244).

Tell Esdar

Tell Esdar is situated on the southern edge of the Beersheba Basin, close to Aroer (Tel Aroer)⁴⁵ on the road between Beersheba and Dimona. Moshe Kochavi excavated Tell Esdar in the mid-1960s (Kochavi 1993a; 1969). The excavations revealed two main phases in the Iron Age—Strata III–II. Stratum III was the most significant layer on the site revealing a plan of three-room and four-room houses in a circular ring around the mound similar to nearby Tel Masos (Stratum II). This layer suffered a sudden destruction, which left smashed domestic vessels. The vessels from Stratum III had no burnish, slip or decoration, which indicates that they relate to the late Iron I (second half of the 11th century BCE). The following Stratum II, revealed a few buildings to the south of the hill that were dated to the Iron IIA based on the difference in pottery assemblage from Stratum II, especially the presence of hand-burnishing and slip (Kochavi 1992; 1993a).

Kochavi interpreted Stratum III as an early Israelite settlement that was destroyed by the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). Stratum II was an Israelite agricultural estate that was re-established in the United Monarchy as part of a wave of agricultural settlements that came into the central Negev (Kochavi 1992, 69). Recently, this dating has been called into question by Herzog and Singer-Avitz, who view the assemblage⁴⁶ of Strata III and II as early Iron IIA (2004, 225). The dating of the site is difficult, but it is tempting to associate the destruction of Stratum III with Shishak in 925 BCE.

If that is the case, then Stratum II would relate to renewed activity in the region in the late 10th–9th century BCE. Stratum II then might relate to a settlement on the road between the Beersheba Valley and En-Hazeva (Tamar). This road is typically referred to as the “ascent of scorpions” (Josh 15:3; Judg. 1:36, Num. 24:4). This route connected the Beersheba Valley to the eastern Aravah through the northeastern Negev Highlands between Machtesh Gadol and Machtesh Qatan.

45. The city of Aroer in the Negev is only mentioned in 1 Samuel 30:28 (Biran and Cohen 1981; Biran 1993), which depicts late 11th century BCE realities during the last days of Saul. The fortress at Tel Aroer only has remains from the late Iron Age. On account of this, some scholars suggest that the Aroer of David and Saul should be located at Tell Esdar (Kochavi 1992, 609).

46. Especially the existence of the smooth-inverted rim cooking pot in both strata.



Figure 5-7 Ascent of Scorpions With Roman Steps © Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com, Used With Permission.

Arad

Due to the untimely death of Yochanan Aharoni, the final report of the excavations of Iron Age Arad, save for the inscriptions (Aharoni, Naveh, and Rainey 1981) has not yet been published. Standing temporarily in the place of a final report, Aharoni's students have produced several excavation summaries of Arad (Herzog et al. 1984, 1–34; 1987, 16–35; Herzog 1997, 174–176; 2002, 3–109). In addition, before his death Aharoni was also able to produce a brief summary of his excavations (1993a, 83–87). Aharoni's stratigraphy of Arad has been the source of considerable debate (A. Mazar and Netzer 1986, 87–91; Herzog 1987, 77–79), which has led to whole-scale changes regarding the stratigraphic sequence of the site. This is particularly the case regarding the temple. Herzog re-examined the material from Arad and concluded that the temple was only built in the “9th or early 8th cent. BCE” and that it only lasted until the end of the 8th century BCE, at which point it was dismantled by Hezekiah of Judah (Herzog 2001: 172–4). In light of Herzog's fundamental shift in his view of the relationship between the biblical text and the archaeological record (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, 241–242), it is difficult to appropriately access his earlier conclusions (which he calls biased) from his later revisions (which are apparently unbiased). Herzog looks

back at his former conclusions this way: “Finally, a strong impact of the ‘biblical archaeology’ paradigm directed both Yohanan Aharoni and his crew members to look for a simplistic correlation between the archaeological data and biblical references. This method, now viewed as oversimplified, is considered a most disturbing and misleading approach” (Herzog 2001, 159). Therefore, it seems best to re-present the basic chronology and interpretation of Aharoni, while highlighting the recent divergences.

Despite its small size (approximately 50 x 50m), the fortress at Arad had a vital function for the Judahite state, as made evident by its massive fortifications and successive re-buildings throughout the period of the monarchy. Arad was one of the most important Negev strongholds, comparable to Beersheba and En-Hazeva in terms of both size and strategic geographical location. The fortress at Arad functioned as a citadel on the routes of the Beersheba Valley, protecting the routes to the ports of the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea (Aravah-Gaza via Tamar, Arad, and Beersheba), as well as guarding the southern entrances into the Judean hill country.



Figure 5-8 Arad Iron II Reconstructed Fortress © Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com, Used With Permission.

Stratigraphy of Iron Age Arad (XII–X)

The excavators concluded that during the 11th century BCE (Stratum XII),⁴⁷ the site was a small village constructed on the southeastern ridge of the ancient city most likely by Kenites (Judg. 1:16).⁴⁸ However, during the Iron IIA (Stratum XI), Arad became a strong fortress constructed on an artificial hill (0.5 m to 1 m in depth) with an open settlement surrounding it. According to the traditional understanding, the origin of the fortress was Solomonic, and the character of the site remained the same for nearly 2,000 years.⁴⁹ A casemate wall surrounded this stronghold⁵⁰ with projecting towers at the corners, gate, and sides of the fortress. The wall was particularly strengthened on the northeastern section because of the gate complex.⁵¹ This fortress was destroyed violently, leaving a thick burnt layer of destruction. The destruction level was attributed to Shishak's invasion in 925 BCE (Aharoni 1993a, 82) (but see below). According to the traditional understanding, Strata XI also introduced a temple structure⁵² in the northwestern corner of the site, which would continue with its general shape and features until Stratum VII (the level which the excavators believed corresponded to the reforms of Josiah).⁵³ Arad offers little in terms of natural water sources, so Israelite Arad re-used the Early Bronze cistern as its main source of water.

The dating of the Shishak destruction of Arad has been a matter of some debate and is vital to an understanding of the significance of the site in the Iron IIA. Shishak's topographical list mentions two "Arads," one of them undoubtedly

47. For Aharoni's complete stratigraphy of Arad's fortress and temple see (1993a, 82–87).

48. Herzog's recent assessment has abandoned the interpretation of an earlier Kenite phase of activity in Stratum XII (Herzog 2002).

49. In the Roman and Moslem periods, the site was also used as a fortress.

50. Standard measurements surrounding rectangular fortress: outer wall, 1.60 m thick; inner wall, 1.40 m thick with a 2 m space between (Aharoni 1968, 5).

51. The gate projected seven meters from the line of the wall in the general form of a "Solomonic" four-chambered gate (Herzog et al. 1984, 7).

52. According to the excavator's original interpretation, this temple may have been an earlier cultic location for the Kenite civilization, as the excavation found evidence of an altar base in the same location as the temple precinct. The excavators make a distinction between a "temple" and a "high place," calling the Arad cultic site a temple due to its layout and features, which are characteristic of biblical temples as they make plain (Herzog et al. 1984, 6, 8). Contrariwise, Ussishkin dates the fortress to the eighth–sixth century BCE and the temple to the seventh–sixth century BCE (1988, 142–157).

53. The temple (or shrine) at Arad was quite dissimilar to the temple in Jerusalem as described in 1 Kings 7, the biggest difference being the niche of the "holy of holies" in lieu of the broad room "holy of holies" in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.

is one of the Iron Age fortress strata at Arad. This campaign was probably at least partly directed at removing Israelite's holdings on the Philistia-Red Sea routes, which had been monopolized in the days of Solomon (Herzog et al. 1984, 8; A. Mazar 2010, 30–31). Related to this, Mazar and Netzer questioned the basic stratigraphy of Arad by in essence moving each stratum a century earlier and eliminating the Kenite phase. In their view, it was Stratum XII that was destroyed by Shishak, while Stratum XI (the casemate fortress) was only founded in the 9th century BCE. They describe their understanding of the stratigraphy of Arad like this, “There are thus four phases in the Arad ceramic typology: (a) The pre-fortress phase (Stratum XII), which may have lasted until the time of Shishak; (b) the 9th century phase (Stratum XI, casemate fortress); (c) Strata X–VIII (8th century B.C.) when there occurred successive alterations and changes of the fortress with the massive walls; and (d) Strata VII–VI, the last phase of the fortress with the massive walls, destroyed c. 587/6 B.C.” However, they also conclude: “Only a detailed final report on the excavations at Arad will supply more information concerning the history of this important site. Let us hope that the team responsible for the recent publication will succeed in its efforts devoted to this painstaking task” (A. Mazar and Netzer 1986, 90). If Mazar and Netzer are correct, which was initially debated by Herzog (1987, 77–79) and then agreed upon later (Herzog 2001, 160), they still conclude that a fortress of Arad was built in the 9th century BCE (Stratum XI vs. X), a date that fits with the regional expansion of Judah in the Beersheba Valley during the days of Jehoshaphat. In light of this reconstruction,⁵⁴ the identity of the destroyer of the fortress of Stratum XI (i.e. the 9th century BCE fortress) may be again related to Aramean activity in the region. However, Herzog believes that the Stratum XI fortress may have lasted until the c. 760 BCE earthquake (2002).

The next phase of the fortress (Stratum X) was completely remodeled with a solid wall replacing the casemate wall and the gatehouse being moved from the northeastern corner to the center of the eastern wall.⁵⁵ The solid wall had a “zig-zag” shape with insets at intervals of 9 to 10 meters, similar to the wall at Tell en-Nasbeh.⁵⁶ The new centralized gate was built with two massive flanking towers

54. It appears that there is general agreement that Stratum XI should be associated with the Shishak destruction, although see Fantalkin and Finkelstein who push this strata even later (2012, 18–42).

55. In some places the casemate wall was filled in (where parts of the wall remained after its destruction), and in others it was completely replaced with a new wall (Herzog et al. 1984, 8).

56. This wall continued to function as the core defense of the fortress until the last Israelite fortress (Stratum VI), that of the final kings of Judah.

that protected the entryway from either side. The additional compartments inside the fortress functioned as garrison rooms similar to the earlier rooms between the piers in the four-chambered gate.⁵⁷ Additionally, a revetment wall and an earthen rampart further strengthened the fortifications by making the approach of enemy combatants all the more difficult.

According to the original report, the temple remained in its basic shape with three small alterations: 1) the building was slightly enlarged (1.5 m to the north); 2) the “holy place” was re-built, matching the width of the forecourt, while the “holy of holies” remained in the same location;⁵⁸ 3) the forecourt was partitioned with a large slender storeroom behind the altar (north) and with a small room just west of the altar;⁵⁹ and 4) a new altar of un-hewn stones was built over the remains of the earlier altar, using it as a step. In recent reports, Herzog has espoused that the temple was only in use during Stratum X and IX (i.e., the 8th century BCE) until it was removed from the fortress at the end of the 8th century BCE, perhaps related to Hezekiah’s reforms (2001, 174–176).

The Stratum X fortress retrofit also added a new water system with the construction of two plastered cisterns (250 cubit m capacity) in the northeastern channel, which were filled via a water channel that ran beneath the wall. The water would have been carried from the main rain cistern near the Early Bronze Age cistern in the center of the ancient city. The basic layout of Stratum X would continue into Stratum IX with only slight changes to the buildings of the fortress.

57. In the southern garrison room an oven was discovered, which helps confirm that these rooms were used for standing forces (Herzog et al. 1984, 10).

58. Aharoni believed that this was re-constructed to match the new Egyptian royal cubit as shown in the Chronicler’s discussion regarding Solomon’s building of the temple (1968, 24). For a more detailed discussion regarding the change from the old to new Egyptian royal cubit, see Barkay and Kloner (1986).

59. Two shallow bowls with the inscription ק on one and כ on the other were found near the sacrificial altar. The excavators concluded that this was an abbreviation of שֶׁדֶק מִיְהוָה “set apart for the priests.” Also, near the altar in the small storage chamber, a red-slipped incense burner was uncovered (Herzog et al. 1984, 10).

Table 5-2 Traditional Interpretation of the Stratigraphy of Arad XII–IX.

Founding	Fortress	Temple	Water	Destroyed
Kenite phase 11 th century BCE Stratum XII	Pre-fortress, ring settlement	“High Place”	EB Water cistern	?
Solomon 10 th century BCE Stratum XI	Casemate wall, four- chambered gate, raised platform	Founded in northwestern corner of fortress	Carried from EB cistern in lower city through gate	925 BCE Shishak
Jehoshaphat c. 868 BCE Stratum X	Solid, “saw- tooth” wall, centralized gate, earthen rampart, revetment wall	Enlarged slightly, forecourt divided	Water channel under north- eastern wall used to fill two plas- tered cisterns beneath temple precinct	c. 848–841 BCE Edom, Philistia, or Arabs
Uzziah 8 th century Stratum IX	No change	Small alter- ations	No change	c. 735–732 BCE Edom

Aharoni attributed the re-model of the fortress to the reign of Jehoshaphat (1993a, 82–87). This tentative conclusion was reached on the basis that the strong reign of Jehoshaphat and his Red Sea-directed ambitions best matched the rebuilding of the fortress after the destruction under Shishak. 1 Kings 22:48–49 and 2 Chronicles 20:35–36 both make clear that Jehoshaphat’s re-opening of the Red Sea port of Etzion-geber was a move requiring control of the Negev and Aravah routes. Despite Arad’s close proximity to the Judahite hinterland, it would seem that the primary purpose of building the fortress was to fortify the Negev, Wilderness, and Arabah trade routes. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to name Jehoshaphat as a good candidate for the rebuilding of Stratum X. However, in light of recent developments in the interpretation of the site it appears best to side with the majority of scholars who see the initial fortification of Stratum XI as occurring in the late Iron IIA or the 9th century BCE. As already stated above, this dating fits in well with the regional fortifications at nearby Beersheba (V), Tel Malhata (V), and En Hazeva/Tamar (VIIA).

Table 5-3 Revised Stratigraphy of Iron Age Arad Following Herzog (2002).

Founding	Fortress	Temple	Water	Destroyed
11 th century BCE Stratum XII	Pre-fortress, ring settlement	–	EB Water cistern	925 BCE Shishak
Jehoshaphat? 9 th century BCE Stratum XI	Casemate wall, four-cham- bered gate, raised platform	–	Carried from EB cistern in lower city through gate	c. 814 BCE Hazeal? c. 760 BCE earthquake?
8 th century BCE Stratum X	Solid, “saw- tooth” wall, centralized gate, earthen rampart, revetment wall	Founded in northwestern corner of fortress	Water chan- nel under northeastern wall used to fill two plas- tered cisterns beneath tem- ple precinct	Edom?
8 th century BCE Stratum IX	No change	Small alterations	No change	Edom?

Aravah

En-Hazeva (Tamar)

Tamar (literally “palm tree”) is only clearly mentioned by name four times in the Bible, with the most important mention in the description of Solomon’s fortifications (1 Kings 9:8: “Tamar in the wilderness”). The other three occur in the prophetic boundaries of the future Israel in Ezekiel (Ezek. 47:18, 19; 48:29).⁶⁰ The site of En-Hazeva has long been a candidate for biblical Tamar (Aharoni 1979,

60. See Lott’s discussion of the textual problems associated with the different mentions of Tamar, Teman, and Tadmor (Lott 1992, 315–316). Aharoni’s discussion is particularly helpful with regards to solving the problem (1979, 319). It would seem that the best solution to the textual problem is to associate the 1 Kings 9:8 with Tamar of En Hazeva and the Tadmor of 2 Chronicles 8:3 as the Tadmor between Mari and Damascus (White 1992, 307). The geographical context of both passages argues strongly for these identifications, although see Schultz (2010) who identifies “Tamar in the wilderness” (1 Kings 9:17) as Jericho.

140), and the excavations, together with the abundant extra-biblical texts, have all but confirmed En-Hazeva's identity with that of Tamar (Bowman 2010, 1–2; R. Cohen 1994, 232).

Table 5-4 Tamar Biblical Sources.

“So Solomon rebuilt Gezer and Lower Beth-horon and Baalath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion” (1 Kings 9:17–19).	“And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and took it. He built Tadmor⁶¹ in the wilderness and all the store cities that he built in Hamath. He also built Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon, fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars, and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had and all the cities for his chariots and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion” (2 Chron. 8:3–6)
“On the east side, the boundary shall run between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side. On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side” (Ezek. 47:18–19).	“And adjoining the territory of Gad to the south, the boundary shall run from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea” (Ezek. 48:28).

61. Codex Vaticanus, LXX (Lucianus reclension), and Vulgate have “Tamar.” The mentioning of “Tadmor” between “Hamath-Zobah” and “Hamath” suggests that this site is in Syria and is not equal to the “Tamar” of 1 Kings 9:17, which follows the west to east geographical line from Gezer to Beth-Horon to Baalath to Tamar. White identifies the Tadmor of 2 Chronicles 8:3 (English) like this: “During the reign of Solomon, Amurru was one of the areas dominated by vassal treaty, and it appears that Solomon fortified it as part of his control of the trade routes, and also as a defense against the encroachments of the Arameans of the kingdom of Damascus. The identity of Tadmor in 2 Chronicles 8:4 as the N oasis on the trade route connecting Mesopotamia and Palestine is certain. The city is mentioned as part of Solomon's building program immediately after the recounting of his conquest of Hamath-zobah in Syria. Therefore the identification of Tadmor as the city mentioned in the Assyrian records, later known as Palmyra, is clear (1992, 307).”

The original salvage excavation of En-Hazeva in 1972 led to the major excavations at the site from 1987 to 1996, directed by Rudolph Cohen and Yigal Y: Israel from the IAA (Israel Antiquities Authority). These excavations were renewed in 2005 and are continuing today. These excavations have revealed eight strata of fortresses ranging from the 10th century BCE through the 20th century CE (Bowman 2010). Of these eight, Strata VIII–VI (including VIIA and VIIB) relate to the Iron II. The following will briefly discuss the stratigraphy of Strata VIII and VIIA and their possible relationships to the Judahite monarchs of Solomon and Jehoshaphat.

A small fortress from the Iron IIA, Stratum VIII,⁶² marks the earliest occupational level at En Hazeva. This fortress is similar in size to several other Negev fortresses from the same time period (R. Cohen 1994, 203–214), and is considered by the excavators (Cohen and Y: Israel 1995) to be the “Tamar in the wilderness” built by Solomon. If the excavators’ stratigraphic sequencing can be accepted and 1 Kings 9:14 can be relied upon as a historical witness,⁶³ then it can be posited that Solomon fortified this site for three reasons. (1) In order to establish and control the Aqaba trade routes from Eilat/Etzion-geber to the Philistine Coast; (2) to protect the routes and Judah from attack against Edom, desert tribes (Amalekites, Meunites, etc.), and Moab, and (3) to secure the copper mines of Edom at Khirbet en-Nahas and Timna (see below).⁶⁴ In fact, because of the continuity of these realities,⁶⁵ En-Hazeva experienced refortification into the 8th century BCE (Iron IIB). According to the excavators, Pharaoh Shishak/Shoshenq destroyed the small fortress of Stratum VIII in 925 BCE during his campaign against southern Judah (and see Levy, Münger, and Najjar 2014 for a note on the discovery of a scarab with the cartouche of Shishak from the area of Khirbet en-Nahas), a scenario well known at other Negev sites (Aharoni 1979, 320–323).

In the ensuing century, Tamar was rebuilt on a much larger scale (Stratum VIIA),⁶⁶ a fortress roughly four times the size of any contemporaneous Negev

62. Formerly Stratum VI (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995; 1996b; 1996a).

63. As of yet, no final report has been completed. Ussishkin offers a few comments on the gate construction, but does not challenge the dating of the various fortifications (2010, 246–253).

64. For a discussion of Wadi Feinan’s significance during the Iron IIA, to Solomon’s kingdom, and the early history of Edom see Levy and Najjar and Finkelstein’s discussion in the mid-2000s (Finkelstein 2005b, 119–125; Levy and Najjar 2006, 3–17).

65. Except for the reign of Uzziah, copper activity ceased after the end of the 9th century BCE.

66. Formerly Stratum V (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995). Recent excavations (2005–present) have exposed two phases in Strata VII, VIIA and VIIB, with VIIA being dated to the 9th–mid-eighth century (Jehoshaphat–Uzziah) and VIIB to the late eighth century (Hezekiah).

fortress (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995, 230). This fortress rivals Beersheba (Stratum IV) in size (2.47 acres compared to 2.8 acres), and accordingly should be similarly viewed as a regional administrative center in the vein of more illustrious 9th century BCE Israelite sites like Jezreel (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995, 230).

An inset-offset casemate wall fortified the administrative center of Tamar (100 × 100 m in area and 2.1 m in width) with three projecting towers flanking the fortress and a four-chambered gate (15 × 12.8 m) guarding the northeastern entrance of the route from Judah (Cohen 1994: 210).⁶⁷ Inside these fortifications were found a storeroom complex (i.e., “pillared buildings,” stables, etc.) and two possible granaries (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995, 229). Certainty on the precise dating of Stratum VII cannot be gained; however, the combination of text (1 Kings 22:47–49, cf. 2 Chron. 20:35–37), and archaeological fortifications parallels (Beersheba (Stratum V or IV), Arad (Stratum XI or X), Tamar (Stratum VIIA), and Khirbet en-Nahas (Stratum 3b), and geographical consistency is suggestive for Jehoshaphat’s rebuilding of Tamar.

Khirbet en-Nahas

Khirbet en-Nahas⁶⁸ is one of the most important excavations for understanding both the dating and the geopolitics of the Iron Age IIA. Most significantly, the excavations have filled a significant gap in our understanding of the Edomites. Until these excavations, there was a general consensus that the Edomites were not established as a territorial state until their subjugation under the Neo-Assyrians in the 8th–7th century BCE (e.g., COS 2.114G (Adad-Nirari III), COS 2.119B (Sennacherib) (Bartlett 1972; 1982; Bennett 1983; Hart 1986; Finkelstein 1992). This was due to the complete absence of early archaeological periods at

67. The excavators highlight the similarities between the four-chambered gates of Tel Jezreel and En-Hazeva Stratum VIIA (R. Cohen and Yisrael 1995). Two similarly sized sites with similar fortifications, dated to the 9th century BCE, show the systemized method by which Israel and Judah carried out their national building projects.

68. Some have suggested that the site should be associated with Irnash (1 Chron. 4:12). Deir Nakhkhas in the Nahal Guvrin valley is the other candidate for this site (Seely 1992, 462). The short-life occupation of this site (10th–9th centuries BCE) would seem to be problematic in attributing it with an ancient toponym (see above in the discussion of Khirbet ed-Dawwara). On the other hand, the nearby Nahal Feinan likely preserves the toponym of Punon/Phanino (Num. 33:42–43), which is in the same region where the serpent (נחש) incident of Numbers 21:4–9 is said to have occurred. The Hebrew word for serpent and bronze is based on this root (Knauf 1992, 556–557; Knauf and Lenzen 1987).

sites such as Buseirah (Bozrah), Taliwan, and Ghrareh despite biblical references⁶⁹ that predated the Neo-Assyrian period and early Egyptian references to “Edom” from the Late Bronze Age (e.g., Papyrus Anastasi VI COS 3.5). Levy and Najjar’s excavations have changed this assumption and effectively added the “missing link” between the early Egyptian sources and the late Neo-Assyrian sources. It appears that the Iron Age IIB–C expression of Edom as a territorial state dominated by foreign powers⁷⁰ had its “typological” roots in the lowlands of the Aravah (Smith and Levy 2008, 42).

The 2002 and 2006 excavations carried out by Levy and Najjar revealed a well-built 10th–9th century BCE square fortress (c. 70 x 80m) with a four-chambered gate (Area A) that sat in front of a large amount of copper mines and slag mounds (Levy et al. 2004; Levy and Najjar 2006; Levy, Najjar, and Higham 2010; Ben-Yosef et al. 2010). This dating was firmly established on the basis of C14 at all three major excavation areas (A, M, S). In addition, the ceramic repertoire falls within the early Iron IIA horizon (e.g., Cypriot Black on Red, Smith and Levy 2008, 77, fig. 23:19–21). The secured dating of the relatively short-lived site at Khirbet en-Nahas represents a “snapshot view of the early lowland Edom” that all other Edomite sites should be compared against (Smith and Levy 2008, 88–89).

Metallurgic production at Khirbet en-Nahas continued throughout the 10th–9th BCE, but several architectural stages in the fortification were observed. Stratum A3b is the initial building phase of the four-chambered gate and square fortification, which dates securely to the mid-10th–mid-9th centuries (Smith and Levy 2008, 47–48). Likewise, Area M and S revealed buildings and metallurgic activity that can be securely dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE. In Stratum A3a, the gatehouse underwent a major restructuring of the fortification, which included the blocking of the gatehouse with the construction of a balustrade in the middle of the passageway. The excavators interpreted this as a “decommissioning of the gatehouse from its former military function into a possible large residence or public building of some kind” (Smith and Levy 2008, 45). This restructuring appears to have occurred sometime in the mid-9th century BCE (Smith and Levy 2008, 48).

69. Gen. 25:30; 32:3; 36:1, 8, 16–17, 19, 21, 31–32, 43; Exod. 15:15; Num. 20:14, 18, 20–21, 23; 21:4; 24:18; 33:37; 34:3; Deut. 23:7; Josh 15:1, 21; Judg. 5:4; 11:17–18; 1 Sam. 14:47; 21:7; 22:9, 18, 22; 2 Sam. 8:12, 14; 1 Kings 9:26; 11:1, 14–16; 22:47; 2 Kings 3:8–9, 12, 20, 26; 8:20, 22; 14:10.

70. Arad Ostraca (COS 3.43K, COS 3.43L), Isa. 11:14; 34:5–6, 9; 63:1; Jer. 9:26; 25:21; 27:3; 40:11; 49:7, 17, 20, 22; Lam. 4:21–22; Ezek. 25:12–14; 32:29; 35:15; 36:5; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:6, 9, 11; 2:1; 9:12; Obadiah.

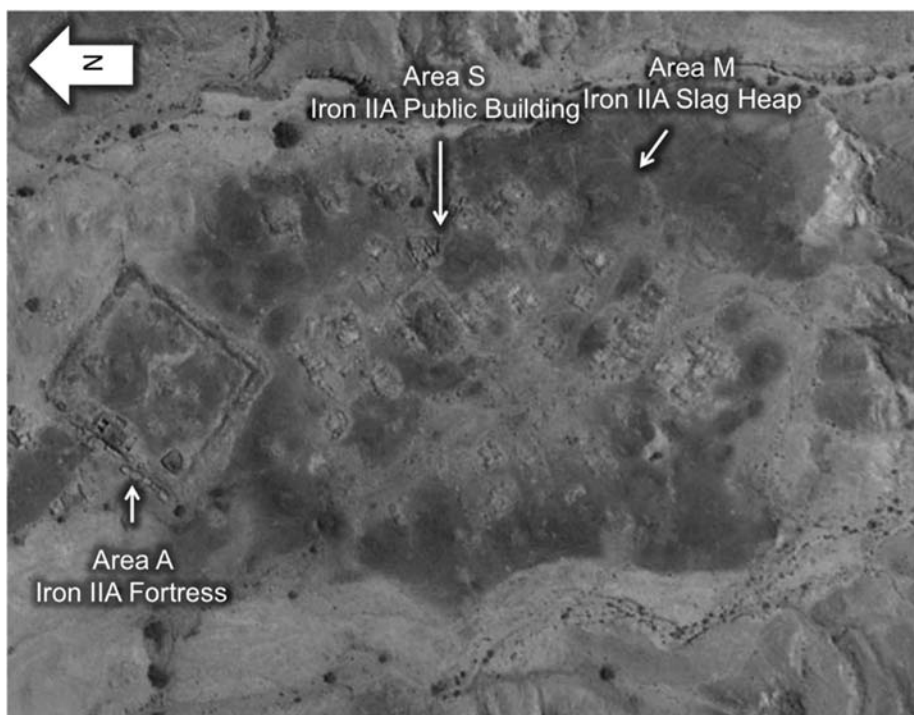


Figure 5-9 Khirbet en-Nahas in the Wadi Ghuweib With Excavation Areas Marked After Smith and Levy (2008:44) © Google Earth.

In light of this clearly dateable stratigraphic sequence, a few historical considerations are worth mentioning. It seems logical to connect the 10–9th century BCE activity at the site and its fortification to nearby En-Hazeva (Tamar) (22 km to the west) and its similar fortifications (Stratum VIIA, 100 x 100m, four-chambered gate). There is a direct geographical and archaeological connection between these two sites, so it would seem likely that whoever built and held the fortress of Stratum VIIA at Tamar also established or controlled the fortification of Stratum 3b at Khirbet en-Nahas. As I have already argued above, Jehoshaphat is a likely candidate for the building of En-Hazeva Stratum VIIA. In light of this and 1 Kings 22:47, it seems logical to propose that Khirbet en-Nahas Stratum 3b was under the hegemony of Judah and Jehoshaphat. Moreover, the sequencing at Khirbet en-Nahas may allow for another historical connection with Jehoshaphat's son J(eh)oram. "In his (Joram) days Edom revolted from the rule of Judah and **set up a king of their own**. Then Joram passed over to Zair with all his chariots and rose by night, and he and his chariot commanders struck the Edomites who had surrounded him, but his army fled home. **So Edom revolted from the rule of Judah**

to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time” (2 Kings 8:20–22). Could this revolt, which can be dated to c. 845 BCE, be related to the mid-9th century BCE decommissioning of the Stratum B3 fortress? Certainty on the matter cannot be had, however, the precise dating of the archaeological strata fits with the biblical witness of Judah’s worsening relations with Edom in the days of Jehoram (853–841 BCE).

Yotvata Fortress and Iron II Copper Activity at Timna

The Iron Age ruins at Yotvata⁷¹ sit on a precipitous, elevated hill just west of highway 90, across from the popular modern way station of the Yotvata Dairy, which serves travellers journeying from Eilat northward to Israel’s major population zones. The modern situation illustrates the significance of this site throughout its occupational history (the Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze I, Iron Age I (but see below), Late Roman and Late Arab (Meshel 1993, 1517–1520)). The springs at Yotvata (Ain el-Gudyan) and its extended distance from other Iron Age sites (c. 38 km south of Tell el-Kheilefeh, c. 100 km south of En-Hazeva, c. 90 km south of Khirbet en-Nahas) indicate that this site, like its modern manifestation, was a vital oasis on the Aravah trade routes.

Meshel, Sass, and Ayalon excavated the Iron Age fortress in the 1970s and 1980s. Their excavations revealed an irregularly built circular casemate fortification (c. 50 × 76 m enclosure with walls varying in width from 1.9–2.4 m wide) with a gate on the western side facing the spring, inside of which was a fallen *massebah*. The casemate wall only covers the northern and western edges of the hill in a semi-circular crescent, as the southern and eastern sides are precipitous cliffs (Meshel 1993, 1518).

The plan of Yotvata’s fortifications was related to the similar structures in the Negev highlands (*hazerim*), which are typically dated to the late Iron I/Iron IIA (Meshel 1993, 1518). However, on account of the visibility of bedrock, the general shallowness of occupational deposit inside the walls, and the lack of a destruction level, the fortress was dated to the early Iron I on the basis of its similarity in material culture to the early Iron Age I remains from the nearby Timna Valley (c. 15 km to the southeast, but see below) (Meshel 1993, 1518). Meshel describes this similarity like this,

The ceramic finds include wheel-made vessels, mainly storage jars; crude Negebite vessels, mainly cooking kraters; and several fragments of Midianite pottery. Other

71. Probably biblical Jothbathah (Num 33:33–34; Deut 10:7) (Zorn 1992b).

important finds, indicating one of the occupation modes of the site's inhabitants and their connections with Timna, are pieces of copper slag, part of a low-quality copper ingot (containing only 75 percent copper), and a small piece of almost pure copper. Both the grinding stones and the flint hammers are probably related to copper production. In sections cut in the fortress's courtyard, a layer of ashes and slag was found against the casemate wall. Remains of date palms and Persian haloxylon; dama, goat, and sheep bones; shells from the Red Sea; and pieces of ostrich eggshells provide evidence of contemporary climatic conditions (which seem to have been similar to those prevalent today).

The dating of the fortress to the beginning of the Iron Age or, more precisely, to the period of activity at Timna is based on the resemblance of the finds to those at Timna, especially the Midianite pottery. The finds associated with copper production also point to a connection between the two sites. The excavators believe that the Yotvata oasis and its environs were a major source for water, acacia charcoal, and maybe even for fresh provisions for the people producing the copper at Timna. The Yotvata fortress overlooks the oasis and the roads leading to it, and it should be attributed to the zenith of copper production at Timna (1993, 1518).

This dating made good sense, given the universal consensus of the dating of the apex of Timna copper activity and trade in the Late Bronze Age and early Iron I. The dating of the fortress to the early Iron I (mid-12th century BCE) was simply a process of elimination. Since no Late Bronze Age remains were found Rothenbergs dated the cessation of copper trade at Timna to the early Iron I (Rothenberg 1972; Manor 1992, 654–656). However, the recent excavation of a 10th century BCE smelt sites at Slaves' Hill/Site 34, a prominent hilltop in the Timna Valley near "Solomon's Pillars," indicates that the Iron IIA was a period of continued metallurgic activity at Timna.⁷² According to Ben-Yosef, Site 34 was a fortified hilltop manned by smelting craftsmen (as opposed to slaves), as 15 slag mounds were identified atop the hill. Slag mound 19 at Site 34 was excavated down to virgin soil, producing ceramic material (inconclusive dating) and fantastic organic remains, which enabled secure C14 analysis.

72. Ben-Yosef believes that the early Iron IIA was the peak of activity and demonstrates that the majority of Rothenberg's published C14 dates were Iron Age, not Late Bronze (Ben-Yosef 2013).

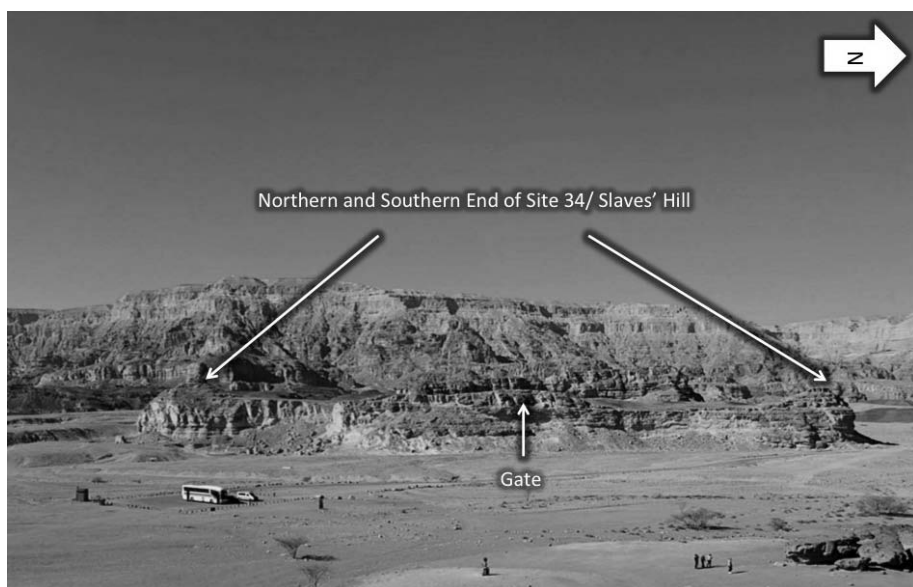


Figure 5-10 Site 34/Slaves' Hill from Solomon's Pillars © Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com, Used With Permission.

The organic remains include textiles, ropes, and date seeds (some of which still had fruit on them). The dating of this organic material indicated that the site was in use from the late 11th century BCE until the end of the 9th century BCE, with a peak of activity in the last third of the 10th century BCE. While noting the complete lack of Egyptian material in his excavations (New Kingdom activity had ceased), Ben-Yosef claims that the peak of activity⁷³ relates to Egyptian presence by Shishak on the basis of a scarab found at Wadi Feinan (Ben-Yosef 2013; Levy, Münger, and Najjar 2014).

73. It is important to point out that Ben-Yosef views the copper activity at Timna as being carried out seasonally (i.e., in the winter-spring months) by a semi-nomadic population who he reluctantly refers to as Edomites (Ben-Yosef 2013).



Figure 5-11 General Satellite View of the Timna Valley With Site 34/Slaves' Hill (Note the Black Slag Mounds) in the Center © Google Earth.

The architecture at the site includes a small gate and a wall that enclosed the hill-top (Ben-Yosef 2013). Overall the picture of Site 34 is nearly identical to that of recently re-excavated site 30 (Khirbat Men'iyeh II). Like Site 34, Site 30 revealed a small enclosure wall with a gate leading into several slag mounds (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012). These fortifications make for an interesting parallel to the fortress of Stratum AB3 at Khirbet en-Nahas and the Iron Age Yotvata fortress (see above). It would seem that the fortifications of the Khirbet en-Nahas and Sites 30 and 34 were primarily meant to provide the craftsmen shelter and protection from theft, since there is no route through the valley and no water source nearby. In fact, the closest water source to the Timna Valley is Yotvata, which has a similar circular fortification atop a hilltop. So there would appear to be a definite connection between the three sites.

On account of this, following the excavator's rationale (see above), it seems logical to date the fortress of Yotvata in relation to the securely dated remains at Timna Sites 30 and 34. This would result in a late 11th century BCE–end of 9th century BCE occupation at the Yotvata fortress, a date which fits both the fortification plan and the similar finds from Site 34. Although it should be noted that in addition to the finds mentioned above, Avner notes the presence of late Iron II Edomite pottery (2008, 1707). This is to be expected since the Yotvata fortress and its spring would have been vital to traffic in both the Timna and Aravah

valleys. The ceasing of copper activity at Timnah towards the end of the 9th century BCE would not have meant the abandonment of Yotvata since it remained on an important trade route in the 8th century BCE when the region was under the domination of the Neo-Assyrian vassal Edom (see above).

Finally, the securely dated sequencing of the mining activity at Site 30 and 34 (11th century–9th century BCE) would seem to fit the traditional view that Israel/Judah in the 10th century BCE exploited the Edomites through some type of obligatory copper production (cf. 1 Kings 7:15–26; 2 Chron. 4:16–18). This connection has been sensationalized by popular media and denied by the excavator who attributes the “peak” of activity in the last third of the 10th century BCE to Shishak (Ben-Yosef et al. 2012, 52). It is clear that there is a striking similarity in the dating of the three sites of Khirbet en-Nahas, Site 30, and Site 34. Each site was occupied in the late 12th/early 11th century BCE and underwent an extensive amount of metallurgic activity in the 10th century BCE that continued into the 9th century BCE but ceased at the end of this century. Ben-Yosef rightly points out that this type of metallurgic activity is indicative of a centralized authority that he identifies with Egypt (Ben-Yosef 2013). But it would seem unlikely that Shishak’s lone campaign would have had lasting effects for Egypt for over a century with the control of Timna and Khirbet en-Nahas. If for the sake of argument, we conclude that these sites were under Egyptian control in the last third of the 10th century BCE⁷⁴ how long would this control have lasted? 20 years (until 905 BCE)? 50 years (until 875 BCE)? Ben-Yosef’s interpretation may help explain the sudden peak of activity in the last third of the 10th century BCE, but it does not sufficiently explain the earlier activity that preceded Shishak’s campaign nor does it explain the continuance of this activity until the end of the 9th century BCE. I will leave the earlier activity for those wishing to make a United Kingdom connection, however, the later activity in the 9th century BCE at Site 30, 34, and Khirbet en-Nahas would seem to fit exceedingly well with the chronistic statement in 2 Kings 22:47–49. In other words, Edomite copper activity in the 9th century BCE undergirds the textual attestation of Jehoshaphat’s presence in northern (2 Kings 3:4–27) and southern (1 Kings 22:47–49) Aravah.

Tell el-Kheilefeh—Elath and Etzion-geber?

In light of the recent confirmation of Nelson Glueck’s dating of Iron IIA Timna and Khirbet en-Nahas (see above), it would seem logical to re-assess the

74. This also does not explain the earlier activity before the “peak” in the last part of the 10th century BCE.

re-appraisal and re-dating of Tell el-Kheilefeh by Pratico (1993). Glueck excavated for three seasons (1938–1940) at Tell el-Kheilefeh (about 1 km north of the shore of the Red Sea), where he claimed to have found extensive architectural, mining, and maritime remains from the 10th century BCE, which he attributed to Solomon. He concluded that the remains meant that the site was that of Elath and Etzion-geber.⁷⁵

Glueck's theories were heralded by some of the most influential archaeologists of the 20th century, including Albright (1960, 127–128) and Wright (1957, 132–137). Despite being met with wide acceptance, Glueck's theories would not last, as his conclusions regarding Tell el-Kheilefeh's mining prominence were shortly shown to be lacking (Rothenberg 1962, 44–65). Additionally, B. Mazar showed that the northern shore of the Red Sea around Tell el-Kheilefeh was too shallow for even small ships, let alone commercial trading ships, and offered no protection or safe anchorage against the well-known violent storms of the Red Sea (1975, 126–131). This meant Tell el-Kheilefeh did not match on geographical grounds either. Finally, the proverbial nail in the coffin came with Pratico's re-assessment of Glueck's excavations, which showed that the pottery and architecture of the site dated to between the 8th–6th centuries BCE and not to the Solomonic era (Pratico 1985, 1–32; 1986, 24–35; Pratico 1993). Pratico's reappraisal has been substantiated and clarified through the recent excavations carried out by the late Mussel (Bienkowski 2008, 1852, 1854; Avner 2008, 1707–1708). These factors lead some scholars to search for Etzion-geber in another location—a location that fits the archaeological, textual, and geographical evidence. The most compelling identification is that of Jezirat Fauran (Coral Island).

Based on the texts listed in the table below, it would seem clear that Elath/Eloth and Etzion-geber refer to two distinct places. See especially 1 Kings 9:26–27, which refers to “Etzion-geber, which is near Eloth,”⁷⁶ in close proximity to one another near the northern shore of the Red Sea in the region of Edom. What is unclear is the two sites' relative situation to one another. Given the available texts, it is impossible to reconstruct whether Elath/Eloth was north, west, south, or east of Etzion-geber or vice versa. This problem leaves the historical geographer with only two systems of analysis: deduction and common sense.

75. Glueck believed that the two cities were in fact one, Etzion-geber being the first, with Elath later constructed on top. He eventually revised some of his conclusions regarding Tell el-Kheilefeh, but never gave up the view that it was Etzion-geber or a mining facility (Zorn 1992a, 429; Glueck 1965b, 15–17).

76. *Contra* Glueck's premise that the two toponyms were the same site (1965a).

The former can be used primarily in conjunction with the relevant archaeological material for the sites. The latter must be a governing principle throughout the entire procedure.

Table 5-5 Etzion-geber/Elath Primary Sources.

Original Account	Parallel Account (if applicable)
“And they set out from Abironah and camped at Etzion-geber . And they set out from Etzion-geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh)” (Num. 33:35–36)	“So we went on, away from our brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road from Elath and Etzion-geber ” (Deut. 2:8). ⁷⁷
“King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Etzion-geber , which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon” (1 Kings 9:26–27).	“Then Solomon went to Etzion-geber and Eloth on the shore of the sea, in the land of Edom” (2 Chron. 8:17).
“Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, for the ships were wrecked at Etzion-geber . Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Let my servants go with your servants in the ships,” but Jehoshaphat was not willing” (1 Kings 22:48–49).	“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah joined with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly. He joined him in building ships to go to Tarshish, and they built the ships in Etzion-geber . Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Maresah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made.” And the ships were wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish” (2 Chron. 20:35–37).
“He (Uzziah/Azariah) built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers” (2 Kings 14:22).	“He (Uzziah/Azariah) built Eloth and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers” (2 Chron. 26:2).
“Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to wage war on Jerusalem, and they besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him. At that time Rezin the king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram and drove the men of Judah from Elath , and the Edomites came to Elath , where they dwell to this day” (2 Kings 16:5–6).	

77. Though these are not parallel events, for the purposes of site identification they have the same function, as they refer to the same “wilderness wanderings,” albeit two different parts of it. Currently, there have been no archaeological remains uncovered that fit the period of the wilderness wanderings (Lubetski 1992, 723), although see Avner who records the existence of Late Bronze-Iron I remains in the Uvda Valley near Timna (2008, 1707).

Original Account	Parallel Account (if applicable)
“Moreover, the king built many ships in the Egyptian Bay of the Red Sea, in a certain place called Etzion-geber : it is now called Berenice , and is not far from the city Eloth . This country belonged formerly to the Jews, and became useful for shipping from the donations of Hiram king of Tyre; for he sent a sufficient number of men thither for pilots, and such as were skillful in navigation, to whom Solomon gave this command: That they should go along with his own stewards to the land that was of old called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India, to fetch him gold. And when they had gathered four hundred talents together, they returned to the king again” (<i>Ant</i> 8.163). ⁷⁸	
Ailath . “On the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom.” Asion Babai (Asiongaber) . (Which is also Asion Gaber . “There the ships of Josaphat were broken (the fleet was destroyed).” It is said to be Aisla (Essia) quite near Aila beside the Red Sea (<i>Onom.</i> 62.15–16).	

The discussion must begin from the known and then advance into the unknown. So what is known about the enigmatic sites of Elath and Etzion-geber? The location of Elath/Eloth has generally been equated with the later Roman site of Ailath/Elana, at a site with no known modern Arabic name (Robinson and Smith 1841, 241, 250–251; Simons 1959, 342; Aharoni 1979, 434)⁷⁹ located “about 1 km NE of Aqaba, about 4 km from Tell el-Kheleifeh” (Zorn 1992a, 429). The later Red Sea harbor has an eventful history in the post-biblical record,⁸⁰ but offers no real clues as to the location of its sister site of Etzion-geber. Parker has uncovered several areas of the Nabatean port city of Aila in the modern city of Aqaba. The excavations have revealed a town of some 50 acres surrounded by a defensive wall (Avner 2008, 1707). Despite the lack of earlier remains at the site, there are no other known sites in the area that provide a better candidate for Elath, which means that Aila/Elath can serve as a provisional starting point for our identification of Etzion-geber.

Robinson was the first to suggest a location for Etzion-geber by seeing a toponymic connection between the modern Arab name Ain el-Gudyan, a small wadi that empties into the Aravah about 35 km north on the shore of the Red Sea, and Etzion-geber (Gudyan = Ezion?) (Robinson and Smith 1841, 241–242; 1856, 169–172). Robinson claimed that there was a direct parallel between the

78. Note that Josephus does not equate Etzion-geber with Berenice (see above).
79. Aharoni attaches the site to the ruin beneath the Arab town of Aqaba, which is about 1 km to the west.
80. An important port during the Hellenistic-Crusader period. Sources and events are summarized in Robinson and Smith 1841: 241, 250–51.

Hebrew and Arabic. This was later rejected by Phythian-Adams who preferred el-Meniyyeh, which is in the Timna valley some 25 km from the Red Sea (1933, 187–188). Likewise, this identification was later shown to be misguided, because of its distance from the Red Sea.⁸¹

Etzion-geber—Jezirat Fauran (“Coral Island”)

Schubert was the first to suggest that Jezirat Fauran was the location of Etzion-geber (Robinson and Smith 1856, 170; Lubetski 1992, 724). Jezirat Fauran named “Coral Island” in modern times although it actually means Pharaoh’s Island, is a small island on the western shore of the Red Sea around 5 km south of the Taba border crossing into Egypt. Lubetski chronicles the known history of “Coral Island” this way,

The search for a natural harbor in the gulf of Elath suggested, therefore, the small island of Jezirat Fauran (recently named Coral Island) as a safe anchorage for boats. Indeed, 19th-century diaries of travelers acknowledged the island as a haven during stormy seas. Robinson (Robinson 1856: 160–61) described it as oriented from NW to the SE, some 300 yards in length with two hills, one higher than the other, linked by a narrow strip of land. On the island, an Arabian fort was found. It was surrounded with battlements, with two pointed arches often signifying gateways. Unvanquished by the fleet of Ronald of Chatillon (c. 1182 C.E.), the fort was identified by the Arabic geographer Abulfeda (c. 1300), with the former citadel of Aila; however, in his own time it was already in ruins. While touring the place, Robinson also quoted former geographers, Laborde, Rüppell and Wellsted. The latter gave it the name Jezirat Fauran the “Island of Pharaoh,” and described it as the only sheltered place for boats when caught in a stormy sea. He sensed that this was perhaps biblical Etzion-geber. It should be noted that the only natural anchorage in the N part of the gulf is the harbor on the island, while the modern ports of Elath and Aqabah are of wholly artificial construction (1992, 724).

Shortly following Rothenberg’s suggestion, a joint expedition team investigated Coral Island and its surrounding waters, revealing a small, well-built harbor on the western side. The expedition found pottery similar to the Midianite and Negebite types found in Timna that dated as early as the Iron I with sherds from the Iron II, and a cyclopean casemate wall with towers projecting into the sea (Rothenberg 1967, 212–213; 1972, 203–207).

81. Many of these early theories were based on the idea that the Red Sea expanded farther northward, up into the Aravah. This hypothesis was shown to be baseless by B. Mazar (1975, 126–131).



Figure 5-12 Jezirat Fauran/Coral Island Satellite View © Google Earth.

Coupled with the fact that the island is the only decent anchorage near the northern shore of the Red Sea, Rothenberg concluded that his earlier suggestion was correct and that Coral Island was in fact biblical Etzion-geber. This conclusion seems to have been confirmed after another expedition to Jezirat Fauran led by Flinder and Linder who found extensive evidence of submarine harbor works similar to other known Phoenician harbors (Flinder 1977, 127–139; 1985, 32–43). The following statement by Flinder best sums up the evidence regarding Etzion-geber's identification:

Can we say that this is Etzion-geber of Solomonic times? The firm dating evidence has not yet been found. What we can say is that there was an impressive maritime installation of considerable complexity at Jezirat Fauran: a fortified island with an enclosed harbor adjoining a large natural anchorage, with jetties located opposite the island on the mainland. But even if we discount all the manmade structures of this anchorage complex, the most convincing argument for its identification as Etzion-geber still remains—the natural formation of the island and its geographical disposition. The part of the casemate wall that seals the small harbor was originally built on an entirely artificial foundation enclosing what had been a small natural bay; thus, in its most primitive form, the harbor is an island with a small protected bay separated from the mainland by a natural anchorage (1989, 41).

Conclusion

If Coral Island is to be identified with biblical Etzion-geber, as I have argued above, what can be said of its relationship to Jehoshaphat's building projects? As we have already argued Jehoshaphat fortified the Aravah route by re-building Arad and Tamar on a large scale. As only some Iron II sherds have been uncovered and no such fortifications have been discovered in the limited excavations at Jezirat Fauran (Avner 2008, 1708) nothing definitive can be said regarding the archaeology pertaining to Jehoshaphat's relationship to the Red Sea port. With that in mind, consider 1 Kings 22:48–49 and 2 Chronicles 20:35–37 (see above for full reading). Both texts clearly state that the ships were wrecked at Etzion-geber, which means that difficult conditions for sea navigation in the northern Red Sea were a reality as far back as the days of Jehoshaphat.⁸² This textual reality well matches Jezirat Fauran. Additionally, the account in Kings identifies these ships as “ships of Tarshish,” a clear textual link to the allied enterprise of Solomon and Hiram that occurred around a century earlier (1 Kings 10:22). This term in 1 Kings 22:48 refers not to a destination, but a type of ship, namely, a ship designed by Phoenician naval experts and designated “ships of Tarshish.”⁸³ With this in view it seems that Jehoshaphat, with Edom subdued,⁸⁴ attempted to re-open the Red Sea port. Given the paucity of textual and archaeological evidence it is impossible to determine if this venture ever experienced success.⁸⁵ In fact, the texts

82. The deadly wind and waves were probably a known danger well before Jehoshaphat's time, due to the lack of any mentioning of the site as a port before the time of Solomon. The three brief maritime trials by the Judahite monarchs (Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Uzziah) speak loudly of their respective personalities in braving the risk of losing their cargo and fleets to attain wealth and prestige.

83. The accounts in Chronicles (2 Chron. 9:21 and 20:36) may have confused the term, making it locative and not descriptive. This could be due to the Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa in the 6th century BCE, as Rainey points out (2006, 165). However, in the case of 2 Chronicles 20:36, the Chronicler might be simply substituting Tarshish for Ophir, as both seem to have been general or even mythical locations to the Chronicler.

84. As had occurred during the latter part of Solomon's reign and would occur again shortly after Jehoshaphat's death in Jehoram's tumultuous reign.

85. One could argue that Jehoshaphat's Red Sea/Etzion-geber ventures may have been in existence earlier than the days of Ahaziah (853 BCE), or even before his alliance with Ahab. There is no reason to assume that Jehoshaphat did not utilize the Red Sea harbor before reaching an agreement with the Omrides. The alliance certainly brought the added benefit of Phoenician expertise, but that does not mean that Jehoshaphat was without naval contacts before the alliance.

(1 Kings 22:48–49 and 2 Chron. 20:35–37) indicate that Jehoshaphat's expedition failed, although for different reasons. It is likewise impossible to determine if the reference to "ships of Tarshish" refers to some type of Judahite/Phoenician trade agreement. Although, Ahaziah's offering of his servants "to go with your servants in the ships" (1 Kings 22:49b) may be indicative of Phoenician involvement via Israel, nothing is explicitly stated. In the end, the real value of both the archaeological and textual evidence of Jehoshaphat's activity at Etzion-geber is not the possible Red Sea trade that he could have established. Rather, it is the establishment that the northern shore of the Red Sea was the furthest extent of Judah's control, which presupposes that the territory to the north of the Red Sea (i.e., the Aravah and biblical Negev) was under his territorial control. This means that site 30 and site 34 at Timna, the Iron Age fortress at Yotvata, Khirbet en-Nahas (Stratum B3), En-Hazeva/Tamar (Stratum VIIA), Tell Esdar (Stratum II), Arad (Stratum XI or X), Tel Ira (VIII), Beersheba (Stratum V) and other Negev sites formed a territorial and economic expansion zone for Judah in the mid-9th century BCE. In other words, Jehoshaphat established the Aravah and Negev trade routes that exploited the copper industry that was manned by Edom, Jehoshaphat's vassal.

Due to these new geopolitical realities, Judah was now able to return to its main avenue of international trade via Edomite suzerainty and the Red Sea ports. Jehoshaphat was again able to return Edom to vassal-hood (1 Kings 22:47). This subjugation would have increased Judah's wealth and prosperity during the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahab. They both realized that attacking one another was not only advantageous for their enemies (mainly Aram, Moab, and Edom), but was completely pointless financially unless they were able to establish rule over the other. Since neither believed they were capable of doing so, each king set about making his main financial access point as prosperous as possible. For Israel and Ahab, this was the Moab-Phoenicia connection. For Judah and Jehoshaphat, it was Edom-Red Sea and Edom-Mediterranean ports.⁸⁶

86. Vassalhood does not necessarily equal poverty for the nation put under financial subjugation. The vassal's financial status or participation in the trade would have been of utmost importance to the continued existence of the trade routes. In actuality, vassalhood was sometimes an economic boon for a fledgling nation. The best examples of this are the Roman annexation of Judea in the first century BCE and the accompanying economic growth under Herod the Great, and of Nabatea in the early second century CE (Graf 1992). In the case of the Nabateans, with their Arabian routes firmly established over centuries of trade, Rome was able to maximize desert trade by both stabilizing and guarding the routes. This forced partnership worked extraordinarily well for both parties, as witnessed by the flowering of second century Nabatean material culture (Graf 1992, 971). While this historical analogy is not a perfect match to our discussion (neither Judah or Israel matches or even rivals Roman influence), it well illustrates the dynamics involved in an economic shared partnership.

This reconstruction fits the archaeological and the textual record, but it does not completely illuminate the geo-political realities of the mid-9th century BCE. The trade traffic would not have ended at Beersheba. The natural destination of this traffic is obviously the Philistine coast and the Mediterranean ports of the Philistines (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod), Israelites (Jaffa? and Dor), and Phoenicians (Acco, Tyre, Sidon, etc.). But how could Judah have brought these goods through the theoretically hostile territory of Philistine Gath? Well, perhaps it was not hostile territory. In light of the above discussion on peaceful Israelite-Philistine relations, perhaps we can also posit that there existed peaceful relations between Philistine Gath and Jehoshaphat's Judah. This does not necessarily mean that they were allies, and certainly there is sufficient archaeological evidence to indicate the establishment of a clear territorial border between the two polities (see Shephelah section above). However, there is no good reason to preclude an established trade relationship between Judah (vassal Edom), Philistine Gath, Israel (vassal Moab), and Phoenician Sidon and Tyre during the era of the Omrides and Jehoshaphat. As we have seen, each of these polities (with the exception of Tyre and Sidon where no major excavations have been carried out) experienced a high point in their political fortunes in the mid-9th century BCE, and each was decimated by Hazael towards the end of the 9th century BCE. They shared similar fortunes and a similar fate. Could these polities have shared a similar trade agreement until Hazael changed the geopolitical landscape?

Conclusion

In this book, we have examined the reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah by using the available archaeological and textual data. As we conclude this study, it seems worthwhile to review both the subjects that I have covered and the historical conclusions that I have made in light of the research questions that I laid out at the onset of this work.

Chapter One dealt with introductory matters related to the state of research related to the Books of Kings and Chronicles and the archaeology of Iron IIA Judah. I also laid out some governing methodological principles and research questions that I attempted to answer in the body of the book. It seems beneficial to repeat and briefly answer the research questions in light of what I have argued in this work.

Chapter Two laid out the historical setting of Judah's neighbors by focusing primarily on Omride Israel and its relationship to Phoenicia and Aram. This discussion addressed the set of historical circumstances that brought about the cessation of Israelite-Judahite hostility during the reigns of Omri and Asa. This chapter also addressed some textual and historical issues associated with Israel and Judah's relationship to Moab (2 Kings 3; 2 Chron. 20:1–30).

Chapter Three included a textual analysis and a historical reconstruction of the Battle of Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:1–36). This chapter also served as a starting point for a discussion of the larger historical setting in which Jehoshaphat reigned. Throughout this chapter, I addressed several issues related to a historical

understanding of this text in relation to the Tel Dan Stele and the larger historical landscape of Aramean-Israelite relations. I also dealt with the Chronicler's version of the battle (2 Chron. 18) and discussed the historical value of the few expansions from the Kings' account. Since this text is often used as evidence for determining that Jehoshaphat was a vassal to Ahab (Walsh 2006, 65–70), I also addressed the arguments associated with this line of thinking.

Chapter Four analyzed the events, policies, and characterization of Jehoshaphat as portrayed in 1 Kings 22:41–50. This analysis is the most important textual element of this book and laid the foundation for the archaeological discussion, which followed. Throughout the chapter, I suggested a positive reading of the chronistic text that accepted the general historicity of Judah and Israel's alliance (1 Kings 22:44), Judah's domination of Edom (2 Kings 22:47), and the reality of Jehoshaphat's Aravah activity that stretched to the Red Sea and beyond. I endeavored to show that this view is at odds with several recent assessments (Finkelstein 2013b; Sergi 2013; Ben-Yosef 2013) that view the late 9th or early 8th centuries BCE as the moment of Judah's rise to prominence in these regions.

Finally, Chapter Five dealt with the archaeological remains of Judah in the late Iron IIA (i.e., the 9th century BCE). My examination largely avoided archaeological survey material and focused on published and some unpublished archaeological sites in Judah that possessed Iron IIA material. My discussion was limited to the regions of Benjamin, the Shephelah, the Negev and the Aravah. Together with the preceding chapter, this section served as the core of my study where I pulled together textual and archaeological source material. In addition to primary material, I interacted with a large body of older and up-to-date secondary literature associated with Judah in the Iron IIA. Throughout this final chapter, I addressed many different historical geographical issues surrounding the identification and political affiliation with the sites in question. In the future, I hope to continue analyzing this material by including archaeological survey and excavation material from the regions discussed and the southern Hill Country of Judah. Altogether, an analysis of this data across these chapters has brought me to three main conclusions regarding the nature of Judah during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the mid-9th century BCE.

Research Questions Answered

In conclusion, let us briefly examine the research questions that I asked at the onset of this work. Below, I have reproduced each of the research questions in *italics* with an accompanying concluding answer.

Do the recorded border conflicts between the various Iron Age southern Levantine nation-states (e.g., Moab, Judah, and Israel) provide information for determining Jehoshaphat and his contemporaries' foreign policies? If so, can the situations of Judah and Israel's neighbors help illuminate the rationale and parameters of the Ahab-Jehoshaphat pact (2 Kings 8:26; 2 Chron. 18:1)? The kingdoms of Judah and Israel in the mid-9th century BCE should be considered as geo-political peers who took part in a marriage alliance (2 Kings 8:26) between two nations on equal footing and not a vassal-suzerain treaty. This alliance was likely enacted for both military and financial reasons, such as Israel's domination of Moab (livestock (2 Kings 3:1; Mesha Stele)), Judah's subjugation of Edom (copper (2 Kings 22:47)), Israel's alliance with Phoenician Tyre and Sidon (1 Kings 16:31), and possibly Israel and Judah's peaceful trade relations with Philistine Gath (see below).

When compared to his immediate predecessor (Asa) and successors (Jehoram and Ahaziah), how do the biblical authors categorize the reign of Jehoshaphat? The Chronicler and the writer of Kings' profile of Jehoshaphat bear a strong similarity to his father (Asa) on almost every level (especially military and cult). The greatest difference is the relative relationship between Israel and Judah during their respective reigns, which changed from hostility to peace. With regards to Jehoram, there is a total disparity between Jehoshaphat and his son on every level (military, cult and diplomacy). In particular, the writer of Kings (also reflected by the Chronicler) highlights Jehoshaphat's sovereignty over Edom against their revolt from Judahite control lost in the days of Jehoram.

What was the geo-political significance of the Judahite kingdom during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the southern Levant? Does archaeology provide testimony for or against a stable, active Judahite kingdom in the mid-9th century BCE? What role should the archaeological evidence play in reconstructing the political sphere of Judah and its neighbors in the second half of the Iron Age IIA? As we have seen, when one uses archaeology to reconstruct history it is impossible to do so in definite terms. Nevertheless, in the case of late Iron IIA (9th century BCE), it seems quite clear that the archaeological evidence points to a significant polity in Judah. My analysis of the archaeological material and the textual data during the reign of Jehoshaphat (872–848 BCE) strongly suggests that Judah was a centralized territorial state that controlled the southern Hill Country, some of the Shephelah, Negev, and parts of the Aravah. Multiple new Iron IIA fortifications in the Shephelah (e.g., Tel Burna, Beth-shemesh), Benjamin (e.g., Tell en-Nasbeh), Negev (e.g., Beersheba, En-Hazeva, Arad) bear witness to an active Judahite kingdom that capitalized on the Edomite copper commerce that flowed through the Negev and Aravah trade routes. The complex trade realities of the late Iron IIA, as reflected in both the archaeological and the biblical record, point to the reality of friendly trade networks

between Judah, Israel, Philistine Gath and Phoenicia. The absence of hostility between these polities in the biblical record underscores this point. This period of prosperity lasted until the mid-late 9th century BCE when Aramean activity under Hazael destroyed many sites of western Judah (2 Kings 12:17). This aggression, which can now be traced across Israel, Philistia and Judah, seems to have halted and transformed most of the geo-political realities that preceded Hazael's rise to power.

Additionally, I have dealt with many different textual, geographical and historical nuances associated with mid-9th century BCE Judah. It is my hope that this nuanced study will serve as a positive academic contribution and a good starting point for future study of Judah in the period in question. I also hope that even if my historical conclusions are not adopted that my rationale for reaching these conclusions would be perceived as coherently stated and logically thought out.

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